

# 3

## Ambaṭṭha Sutta

The Ambaṭṭha Discourse | D 30

Theme: Religious arrogance versus spiritual openness

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007

### 1 Introduction

**1.0 THE AMBAṬṬHA SUTTA.** The Ambaṭṭha Sutta (D 3)<sup>1</sup> has at least two levels of meanings: first, it is a social comment made by the Buddha against the class system of his times, and second, more importantly, it is a prophetic message of sort, that is, Buddhism always needs the Dharma to be alive. This message is ever more relevant today as monasticism has reached such an unprecedented level of laicization and brahminization [5]. If our choice is the spiritual path to self-awakening, then the Ambaṭṭha Sutta is a vital vehicle to expedite our journey.

The Aṅguttara Commentary, commenting on *cārikā* (the Buddha’s teaching tours), refers to the commentary on the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, where a detailed explanation of the term is found.<sup>2</sup> Along with such suttas as the Soṇa,daṇḍa Sutta (D 4) and the Kūṭa,danta Sutta (D 5), the Ambaṭṭha Sutta is regarded as one of the major debates (*mahā,vāda*) that the Buddha has had with the brahmins.<sup>3</sup> The eight kinds of knowledges (*vijjā*) are also detailed therein.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

**1.1.1 Ambaṭṭha sees the Buddha.** The Ambaṭṭha Sutta (D 3) is divided into two general sections according to recital cycle (*bhāṇa,vāra*): the first, on the Buddha’s debate with Ambaṭṭha [§§1.1-28], and the second, on the fruits of recluseship, Ambaṭṭha’s failures, and Pokkhara,sāti’s conversion [§§2.1-22]. The sutta opens with **Pokkhara,sāti** [§1.2.1], hearing that the Buddha is staying in the Icchānaṅgala forest [§§1.1-2], sends the arrogant brahmin youth (*māṇava*) Ambaṭṭha to find out if the Buddha really has the 32 “marks of the great man” (*mahā,purisa,lakkhaṇa*) [§§1.3-5; 2.2.1].

**1.1.2 Ambaṭṭha’s accusations.** Ambaṭṭha goes to meet the Buddha [§§1.6-9], but is arrogant towards him, not showing proper social decorum during the conversation and calling him a “menial,” so that the Buddha reprimands him [§1.10.1]. Upset, Ambaṭṭha retorts with these accusations:

- that the Sakyas are fierce, harsh, touchy and violent [§§1.10.2-12];
- that the Sakyas were discourteous to Ambaṭṭha when he was in Kapilavatthu [§13];
- that like everyone else, the Sakyas should wait upon the brahmins, who are the highest of four classes;<sup>5</sup> (here is where the Buddha gives the famous parable of the quails) [§§14-15].

The Buddha rejects all these allegations, and recounts the origin of the Sakyas [§1.16.2] and the humble beginnings of the Kanhāyana (Krsnāyana) clan, to which Ambaṭṭha belongs [§1.16.3]. The Buddha is not trying to humiliate Ambaṭṭha, but trying to show him that class is not due to birth (not birth alone, anyway). The other brahmin youths present then protest, reminding the Buddha of Ambaṭṭha’s brahminical qualities [§1.17], but interestingly omit mention of his complexion (the reason for which will be apparent soon). The Buddha then clarifies as to with whom he should be debating so that the discussion is focussed, and the brahmin youths relent [§1.19].

**1.1.3 “Reasonable question.”** The Buddha continues to question Ambaṭṭha on his origins, charging that a “reasonable question” (*saha,dhammika pañha*)<sup>6</sup> has arisen, and if he fails to answer it, his head will

<sup>1</sup> The **Chin** parallels for **Ambaṭṭha S** are: DĀ20 = T1.82, T20 = T.259. The **Tib** Tripitaka (Beijing ed. Ōtani repr, Tokyo, 1956): P1030 = P41.143, P1035 = P44.198. The **Skt** fragments: Jens-Uwe Hartmann, “Fragmente aus dem Dīrghāgama der Sarvāstivādins, in ENOMOTO Fumio et al (eds), *Sanskrit-Texte aus dem buddhistischen Kanon: Neu-entdeckungen und Neueditionen* (= *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden*, Beiheft 2), Göttingen, 1989: 61-67.

<sup>2</sup> AA 2:285 f, ie to DA 1:239-243.

<sup>3</sup> MA 3:242.

<sup>4</sup> The 8 knowledges are insight knowledge (*vipassanā,ñāṇa*) [D 2.83], psychic power of the mind-made body (*mano,mayā iddhi*) [D 2.85], and the six direct knowledges (*cha abhiññā*) [D 2,87-2.98] (VA 1:116, 2:495).

<sup>5</sup> These 4 were the classes (*vaṇṇa*) of ancient India: generally the kshatriya was a noble; the brahmin, a priest; the vaisya, a merchant; the shudra (or helot), a menial worker. See **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90), SD 10.8 (6).

“shatter into seven pieces” [§1.20], a common expression, as we shall see [4.1]. Vajira,pānī [4.2] appears, acting as a bailiff, as it were. The terrified Ambaṭṭha cowers behind the Buddha, relents and owns up everything [§1.21].

**1.1.4 Ambaṭṭha humbled.** At this new revelation, the other brahmin youths are appalled and condemn Ambaṭṭha [§1.22], but the Buddha moderates them, reminding them that the powerful rishi Kanha was Ambaṭṭha’s ancestor [§§1.23]. Having dealt with Ambaṭṭha personally, the Buddha now goes on to debate against the brahmins as a class. He asks a series of questions on how to distinguish the class of an offspring of a kshatriya and a brahmin in various cases of mixed marriage [§§1.24-27]. He concludes his debate with a quote from the brahma Sanañ,kumāra (Skt Sanat,umāra), who, according to Vedic tradition, is one of the five mind-born sons of Brahmā, on the superiority of the kshatriya [§1.28]. The first recital cycle (*bhāṇavāra*) ends here, for an intermission, as it were.

**1.1.5 Knowledge and conduct.** In the second half of the sutta (the second recital cycle), the Buddha, in answer to Ambaṭṭha, begins to explain Sanañ,kumāra’s verse in terms of the fruits of asceticism (*sāmañña,phala*), in terms of **knowledge and conduct** (*vijja,carana*)<sup>7</sup> [§2.1]. This twofold approach is significant as the Buddha wishes to impress on Ambaṭṭha’s mind the importance of *both* theoretical knowledge *and* the trained mind [3.1]. The Buddha expounds the well known *sāmañña,phala* stock passage on the threefold training in moral virtue, mental cultivation and wisdom [§2.2], found in the first 13 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya.

A full listing and definition of this knowledge and conduct is given in **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53), which goes on to define in some detail (including a delightful parable of the hatchlings), 15 qualities of the learner given in six sets (which are also the Buddha’s qualities by way of “conduct,” *carana*),<sup>8</sup> and the 3 kinds of knowledges (*vijjā*).<sup>9</sup> The listing in **the Ambaṭṭha Sutta**, however, is shorter, giving only the following 6 sets on conduct, namely:

(1) Restraint by moral virtue (training in moral virtue)	( <i>sīla,samvara</i> )	[§§2.2.1-D 1.27],
(2) Sense-restraint	( <i>indriya,samvara</i> )	[D 2.64],
(3) Mindfulness and clear knowledge	( <i>sati,sampajañña</i> )	[D 2.65],
(4) Contentment	( <i>santuṭṭhi</i> )	[D 2.66],
(5) Abandoning the mental hindrances, ie meditation	( <i>samādhi</i> )	[D 2.67-75.1], and
(6) The 4 dhyanas	( <i>jhāna</i> )	[D 2.75.2-82].

And the 7 knowledges, as follows:

Knowledge and vision (insight knowledge)	( <i>ñāṇa,dassana</i> ) <sup>10</sup>	[D 2.83-84],
Knowledge of the mind-made body	( <i>mano.mayā,kāya,ñāṇa</i> )	[D2.85-86],
Psychic powers	( <i>iddhi,vidhā</i> )	[D 2.89-90],
The divine ear (clairaudience)	( <i>dibba,sota</i> )	[D 2.91-92],
Mind-reading	( <i>ceto,pariya,ñāṇa</i> )	[D 2.93-94],
The divine eye (retrocognition)	( <i>dibba,cakkhu</i> )	[D 2.95-96], and
The knowledge of the destruction of the influxes	( <i>āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa</i> )	[D 2.97-98].

It is clear here that while the emphasis in the Sekha Sutta (M 53) lists is on conduct and wisdom, the Ambaṭṭha Sutta listing is on superhuman knowledges. This is understandable as the audience is Ambaṭṭha and the brahmin youths, who are not followers of the teaching.

**1.1.6 The 4 sources of loss.** Then the Buddha gives a special teaching to Ambaṭṭha by way of “the four sources of loss” (*āpaya,mukha*) [2.2], charging that the brahmins of the day do not behave as true brahmins, namely, the ancient rishis [§2.3-5]. Furthermore, although rajah Pasenadi of Kosala is a supporter of Pokkhara,sāti, the rajah does not deal with him directly [§2.6], and in an ironic simile, illustrates

<sup>6</sup> D 3,1.21/1.94 f & M 35,14/1:231 respectively. See M:H 1: 285 n2.

<sup>7</sup> See Gethin 2001:207 n79.

<sup>8</sup> Noted briefly at AA 3:151 and SA 1:217, and more fully at SA 1:219.

<sup>9</sup> See M 53/1:353-359, SD 21.14 (2.2-2.3).

<sup>10</sup> On *ñāṇa,dassana* and claims of omniscience, see Jayatilleke 1963:419 (§720).

how one's birth, or proximity with the rajah, does not make one a rajah (that is, class does not truly arise from birth).

**1.1.7 Invoking history.** The Buddha then invokes ancient brahminical history or hagiography, reminding those present of how the ancient rishis lived simply and spiritually, unlike the brahmins of the day [§§2.8-10]. The Buddha then offers Ambaṭṭha an opportunity to clear his spiritual doubts [§2.10.2], but Ambaṭṭha is too engrossed in investigating whether the Buddha has all the 32 marks of the great man to respond [§§2.11-12].

Satisfied that he has accomplished his mission, Ambaṭṭha returns to Pokkhara,sāti at the Subhaga,vana [1.2], and recounts to him what has transpired [§§2.13-14]. Pokkhara,sāti, shocked, terrified and angered at Ambaṭṭha's insolence towards the Buddha, scolds and kicks him [§2.15]. Pokkhara,sāti then expresses his desires to meet the Buddha, but is advised on the late hour. In his eagerness, he immediately gets the meal offering ready, and leaves at dawn [§2.16].

**1.1.8 Pokkhara,sāti's Dharma-eye.** On meeting the Buddha, Pokkhara,sāti shows him every courtesy [§2.17], and on confirming that the Buddha has all the 32 marks [§§2.18-19], invites him for the morning meal [§2.20]. The Buddha prepares Pokkhara,sāti (and the audience) with a gradual discourse and the four noble truths, as a result of which Pokkhara,sāti attains the Dharma-eye [§2.21], and he, along with his family and retinue, takes refuge in the Three Jewels [§2.22].

**1.2 POKKHARA,SĀTI.** Pokkhara,sāti was a brahmin of great wealth (*mahā,sāla*),<sup>11</sup> great learning, and a sign-reader or physiognomist,<sup>12</sup> who lived in Ukkatṭhā.<sup>13</sup> **The (Brahma,vihāra) Subha Sutta** (M 99) gives his full name as *Pokkhara,sāti* (or *Pokkhara,sādi*) *Opamañña Subhaga,vanika*, meaning “**Pokkhara,sāti of the Upamañña clan, lord of Subhaga Grove.**”<sup>14</sup> His personal name (or nick-name) was Pokkhara,sāti, or Puškara,sādi in Sanskrit, meaning “blue-lotus teacher.” “Opamañña” means “of the Upamañña clan,”<sup>15</sup> which in Sanskrit could be *Upamanyu*.<sup>16</sup> **The Divyāvadāna** calls him Puškara,sārī,<sup>17</sup> and relates a story of his daughter, Prakṛti.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Mahā,sāla*, lit “having great halls,” an epithet signifying great wealth (D 1:136, 235, 3:16, 20; J 2:272, 4:237, 325, 5:227; Pug 56; VbhA 519; DhA 3:193). This should not be confounded with the village of **Mahā,sālā**, east of Kajaṅgalā, which the eastern border of Majjhima,desa crossed (V 1:197; J 1:49, Mahā,sāla).

<sup>12</sup> *Nemittika*, like Jāṇussoṇī (SnA 462; cf KhpA 107).

<sup>13</sup> DA 399. Comy says that Upamañña (prob, Skt *upamanyu*) is his gotra or clan (*opamañño'ti upamañña,gotto*, MA 3:337,4), and glosses *subhaga,vanika* as “the supreme lord of the Subhaga forest near Ukkatṭhā” (*ukkatṭhāya subhaga,vanassa issaro*) (MA 3:447,5). **Ukkatṭhā** (Skt Utkāṭa or Utkāṭā) is a town in Kosala, near the Himālaya. Rajah Pasenadi of Kosala has given it as brahmadeya (fief) to Pokkharasāti, in recognition of his skills. It is well populated and had much grassland, woodland and corn. The Icchā,naṅgala jungle is in the neighbourhood. There is a road connecting Ukkatṭhā with Setavyā (A 2:37) and with Vesālī (J 3:259). The brahmin youth **Chaṭṭha** travels from Setavyā to Ukkatṭhā to learn under Pokkharasāti (VvA 229; cf AA 3:75). Ukkatṭhā was also the residence of the monk **Aṅganika Bhāradvāja** (ThaA 2:83). Buddhaghosa explains that Ukkatṭhā was so called because it was built by the light of torches (*ukkā*) at night, so that it might be completed within the auspicious time. Skt sources: *Utkāṭo nāma,droṇa,mukhaṃ* (Mvyut 5285); *Utkāṭam nāma droṇa,mukhaṃ* (Divy 620.12). *Droṇa,mukha* (found only of *Utkāṭa*) means prob = AMg *doṇa,muḥa*, “a city near a port.” Tib gloss (of Mvyut 5285) is *luñ paḥi mdaḥ*, “outlet of a valley.” Divyāvadāna calls it Utkūtā at Divy 319.10. See BHSD: sv Utkāṭa.

<sup>14</sup> M 99.10/2:200. **Subhaga,vana**, a grove in Ukkatṭhā belongs to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti. Once, when the Buddha is there, he visits the Avihā gods (D 2:50) and, again, from there he visits the brahmā Baka, recounted in the **Brahma,nimantanika S** (M 49/1:326; cf S 1:142, where it is set in the Jetavana at Sāvattṭhī). The forest is called Subhaga (“agreeable”) because of its beauty. People often go there for pleasure, and, influenced by the pleasant nature of the surroundings, would plan pleasant things, which will come to pass (MA 1:10). The Subhaga Grove has a royal sal tree (*sāla,rāja*), under which the Buddha delivers **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1/1:1-6) & **Brahma,nimantanika S** (M 49/1:326-331).

<sup>15</sup> MA 3:447; *Opamañña* is also the name of a god mentioned in **Mahā,samaya S** (D 20.10/2:258) = **Āṭṇaṭṭiya S** (D 32.10/3:204).

<sup>16</sup> SED sv: “striving after, zealous” (in the quest for knowledge and wisdom), R̥gveda 1.102.9.

<sup>17</sup> Divy (ed L Vidya, 1959) 319.10-354.5 (passim), but this person does not seem identical to Pokkhara,sāti.

<sup>18</sup> Divy (ed L Vidya, 1959) 319.16, 22, 320.10+18.

Since he resided in Subhaga Grove (*subhaga, vanika*), he was known as its lord (*issara*).<sup>19</sup> He was also lord of the prosperous and well-populated **Ukkaṭṭhā** [§1.1.2], which he received as fief or brahmadeya (*brahma, deyya*) from rajah Pasenadi of Kosala.<sup>20</sup> Owing to his eminence,<sup>21</sup> he was present at the meetings of other eminent brahmins held in Manasākata<sup>22</sup> and in Icchā, naṅgala.<sup>23</sup>

The Commentaries contain lengthy passages<sup>24</sup> on Pokkhara, sāti. In the time of Kassapa Buddha, he was a brahmin, well versed in the three Vedas who, having heard the Dharma and given alms, was reborn in the deva world. Thereafter, scorning birth in a human womb, in our Buddha's time, he was said to have arisen in a lotus, growing in a pond in Himāva (the Himalayas). An ascetic saw the lotus, adopted the lotus boy, and taught him the Vedas. The king, pleased with his great learning, gave him Ukkaṭṭhā as brahmadeya [§1.1.2].

The name Pokkhara, sāti was given to him owing to his being lotus-born. Pokkhara, sāti had a regal appearance. His body was of the hue of a white lotus, shining like the silver of a celestial city; his hair was black, as if made of sapphire; his beard was like the moon-disc lined by black clouds; his eyes like blue lotuses, and so on.<sup>25</sup> **The Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3) closes, recording that as a result of the Buddha's teaching, Pokkharasāti becomes a streamwinner (D 3,2.21-22/106 f).

Buddhaghosa says that Vāsettha<sup>26</sup> was Pokkhara, sāti's chief disciple.<sup>27</sup> In **the (Brahma, vihāra) Subha Sutta** (M 99), Subha Todeyya, putta, another disciple, reports that Pokkhara, sāti believes that it is impossible for recluses or brahmins to attain superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. This clearly refers to a time before his conversion.<sup>28</sup> The same Sutta mentions Punṇikā, a slave girl of Pokkhara, sāti.<sup>29</sup> The Vimāna, vatthu mentions another of his disciples, the brahmin youth Chatta, who was killed while bringing his teacher's honorarium.<sup>30</sup>

### 1.3 AMBAṬṬHA

**1.3.1 The Ambaṭṭha clan.** In the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, if Ambaṭṭha is taken as the villain, Pokkhara, sāti may be regarded as the hero who finally gains the Dharma-eye [§2.21], that is, becomes a streamwinner.<sup>31</sup> In fact, more than half the sutta centres around Ambaṭṭha, while his teacher Pokkhara, sāti appears only near the end, as if by way of a climax [§2.13]. It is Ambaṭṭha, however, who gives his name to the sutta, and there are good reasons, as we shall soon see [2.1].

According to the Mānava Dharma, śāstra (10.8+47),<sup>32</sup> the *Ambaṣṭha* (Sanskrit cognate of Ambaṭṭha) clan did not arise from the union of a kshatriya father and a slave mother (presumably a shudra), as stated in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta [§1.16.3], but from a brahmin father and a vaishya mother (a fact reflected in the SED definition of Ambaṣṭha).<sup>33</sup> This clan name, to which Ambaṭṭha Mānava belongs, as such, is ancient, one that had arisen from mixed marriages. The Dictionary of Pali Proper Names says that “the Kaṅhāya-

<sup>19</sup> MA 3:447.

<sup>20</sup> *Brahma, deyya*: see §1.1b n below.

<sup>21</sup> DA 2:399.

<sup>22</sup> **Tevijja S** (D 13,2/1:235), SD 1.8.

<sup>23</sup> **Vāsettha S** (Sn p115).

<sup>24</sup> DA 1:243-247; MA 3:446 f; SnA 462; VvA 229 f, 234.

<sup>25</sup> DA 1:244 f = MA 3:446.

<sup>26</sup> Sn 594.

<sup>27</sup> D 2:399; SnA 2:463; cf Sn p116.

<sup>28</sup> M 99,10/2:200 f; also **Caṅkī S** (M 95,9/2:167), where “Pokkhara, sāti and his wife and children” are said to have taken refuge in the Buddha; and also here in Ambaṭṭha S (D 3,2.22/1:110); see also **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4,6/1:116), **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5,7/1:133); **Vāsettha S** (M 98,5/2:196) = Sn p115.

<sup>29</sup> M 99,11/2:201. The Buddha says that Pokkhara, sāti is not a mind-reader, unable to know what is on even in the slave-girl Punṇikā's mind, much less know the minds of recluses and brahmins.

<sup>30</sup> Vv 53.5.3/79-83; VvA 229-243.

<sup>31</sup> Technically, attained to the path of stream-winning (*sotāpatti, maggo adhippeto*), DA 1:278.

<sup>32</sup> See Olivelle 2004.

<sup>33</sup> This explanation makes better sense if they were “conventionally” (*vohāra, vasena*) accepted as brahmins (J 4:-363, 366), and which explains why the retinue of brahmin youths' accept and support Ambaṭṭha (§1.17+19).

na-gotta was probably one of its chief sections, or, perhaps, the family of its original ancestors” (sv Ambaṭṭha-gotta).

In the Buddha’s time, the clan is probably considered very aristocratic, at least by its own members, because they look down upon the Sakyas as “menials” [§1.10.2]. Evidently, the Sakyas do not take this claim seriously [§§1.12-13]. As demonstrated by the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, the Ambaṭṭhas are not brahmins by birth [§1.16.3]. Some of them are farmers and traders, and some even sell their daughters for gold.<sup>34</sup> Besides the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, another namesake, called Sūra Ambaṭṭha, is mentioned in the Aṅgutara.<sup>35</sup>

**1.3.2 Ambaṭṭha Mānava.** We know the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha by his clan name, as Ambaṭṭha Mānava. The Ambaṭṭha Sutta tells us that he is a resident student (*antevāsī*) of Pokkhara, sāti, at Ukkaṭṭhā. He has mastered the mantras, that is, the Three Vedas, and their related branches [§1.3]. Like his teacher, a physiognomist or sign-reader (*nemittika*), Ambaṭṭha, too, is also familiar with the 32 signs of the great man. As such, when the Buddha is staying in the nearby forest, Pokkhara, sāti sends Ambaṭṭha to investigate if the Buddha has all of them [§1.4.3].

In the sutta, Ambaṭṭha appears as a tragic figure, arrogantly priding in his brahminical status, but forgetting his humble roots. As such, he represents one who is very status-conscious, and takes learning or academic qualification as a status marker, rather than as just another step in a life-long learning towards spiritual liberation.

Indeed, Ambaṭṭha, on meeting the Buddha is almost immediately hostile to him, simply because the Buddha is not a brahmin! [§1.9-10]. From the ensuing conversation, we can surmise that he has had some bad experience with the Sakyas [§1.12-13], a point which actually confirms that the Sakyas do not take the Ambaṭṭhas’ claim to brahminhood seriously [1.3.1].

Apparently, Ambaṭṭha’s hostility towards the Buddha is deep-rooted, going back to a past life. For, he appears in the **Mahā Ummagga Jātaka** (J 546) as Kāvinda, one of the four sages of rajah Vedeha of Mithila, and Pokkhara, sāti (Ambaṭṭha’s teacher) is identified as Pukkusa.<sup>36</sup> The other two sages of rajah Vedeha are Devinda (identified with the wanderer Pilotika),<sup>37</sup> and Senaka (identified with the nirgantha Saccaka).<sup>38</sup> In the Buddha’s times, all except Ambaṭṭha become the Buddha’s disciples.<sup>39</sup>

Ambaṭṭha comes to see the Buddha, as instructed by his teacher, to ascertain if the Buddha has all the 32 marks of the great man. Aware as he is of the fact that the Buddha is a great and awakened teacher [§1.4], he shows no interest whatsoever in the Buddha’s spirituality or in learning the Dharma. He is only interested in knowing the Buddha’s external and physical features that qualifies him as a “great man” (*māha, purisa*). And despite the Buddha’s willingness to teach him the Dharma [§2.10.2], Ambaṭṭha, having completed his set task, immediately leaves [§2.12].

The Ambaṭṭha Sutta account of Ambaṭṭha Mānava ends rather abruptly by his being ignominiously kicked by Pokkhara, sāti [§2.15]. Nothing more is heard of him after that. Buddhaghosa, however, notes: “Whereas before he would, as charioteer, ride the chariot with his teacher, after being deprived of that status, he went his way on foot before the chariot.”<sup>40</sup> In that case, it is possible that he could have followed Pokkhara, sāti when he himself meets the Buddha.

Buddhaghosa adds that the Buddha knows that for Ambaṭṭha, “there is no attaining the path with this (present) personality,”<sup>41</sup> that is, he thinks that it would be futile for the Buddha to teach him the Dharma.

<sup>34</sup> J 4:363. They were called brahmins by convention (*vohāra, vasena*) (J 4:363, 366).

<sup>35</sup> A 1:26, 3:451.

<sup>36</sup> J 546/6:329-478, esp J 6:478.

<sup>37</sup> **Cūḷa Hatthi, padopama S** (M 27/1:175-184).

<sup>38</sup> **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35/1:227-237), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36/1:237-251).

<sup>39</sup> If we go by the Buddha’s track record, it is likely that Ambaṭṭha, like Upaka (who is one of the first humans to meet the newly-awakened Buddha), in due course does become a saint, but apparently we do not have or have lost any such account.

<sup>40</sup> *Yañ ca so pubbe ācariyena saddhiṃ rathaṃ āruhitvā sārathi hutvā agamāsi, tam pi’ssa thānaṃ acchinditvā rathassa purato padasā yev’assa gamanaṃ akāsi* (DA 1:277).

<sup>41</sup> *Iminā atta, bhāvena magga, pātubhāvo n’atthi* (DA 1:274).

Ambaṭṭha himself has not freely come to the Buddha, much less to seek the Dharma, but is on an errand to investigate if the Buddha has all the 32 marks of the great man. According to Buddhaghosa, the Buddha gives him lengthy teachings so that these may be repeated to Pokkhara,sāti.<sup>42</sup> However, it is interesting that Buddhaghosa makes this remark after his glosses on “doubt” (*kaṅkhā*) and “perplexity” (*vimati*), that is, *after* the Buddha has said, “Anyway, be that as it may, Ambaṭṭha, as regards your doubt or perplexity, question me, I will clarify it with an explanation.” [§2.10.2]. It is Ambaṭṭha who does not respond, being engrossed in his investigation of the Buddha’s 32 marks. Clearly, the Buddha would have taught him the Dharma if he had directed his attention to it.<sup>43</sup>

**1.3.3 The Ambaṭṭha Mānavas of today.** The Ambaṭṭha Sutta records the remarkable Living Word of the Buddha, highly relevant even today, to warn us against turning Buddhism into a worldly system, but to keep to its original role of being a spiritual path. An important lesson from the Ambaṭṭha Sutta is that we should never take Buddhism, or any form of Buddhism, or Buddhist learning (consciously or unconsciously), as a status marker.<sup>44</sup>

To regard Buddhism or learning as a status marker is to equate our *paper qualification* with *personal experience*.<sup>45</sup> Although the two may overlap as we mature in life, for the most part, they are worlds apart. Paper qualification is generally for the sake of earning a living and supporting ourselves in a mundane sense, but religious commitment, or better, spiritual experience, arises from a mature acceptance and understanding of the Dharma, providing us with insight and compassion that no paper qualification can.

Many mature western Buddhist practitioners, for example, would be perplexed, if not flabbergasted, if Asian Buddhists were to perceive a white speaker, on account of skin colour, as being a better teacher or speaker than a non-white, or that someone with a “Dr” title or any kind of academic qualification, is, on that account alone, qualified to speak on Buddhism!<sup>46</sup>

Although Gautama Buddha may not physically be with us here today to personally admonish us, or that Pokkhara,sāti is not able to helpfully kick us into reality today, the Ambaṭṭha Sutta is still with us, as are many other even more practice-centred texts, to guide us along the true and clear path to awakening. We can begin by letting go of status consciousness and religious materialism.

With advancement and availability of printing and books, and the interconnectivity of the internet, we can easily collect the best information on Buddhism, and with a dash of ego we can easily set up a website to market our ideas to the world. Never before is wrong view and hubris so easily self-propelled onto such a global scale! The bottom line is that we simply become Buddhist orphans undernourished by instant Buddhism, stamping our names onto the labours of others without giving due credit!<sup>47</sup>

Then there are those who pontificate with their “two cents” worth of grand remarks and sweeping opinions regarding issues that need careful survey, thought and action. For such generous but penurious babblers, it is wiser to save up, before their imperial clothes wear even thinner.

<sup>42</sup> DA 1:274.

<sup>43</sup> In **Kandaraka S** (M 51), Pessa the elephant trainer’s son, leaves before the Buddha could finish his instruction on the 4 types of persons (in terms torturing self and others), but if he had stayed on to listen to the admonition, he would have become a stream-winner (M 51.4-7/1:340-342).

<sup>44</sup> **Soṇa,daṇḍa S** (D 4) records how Soṇa,daṇḍa, on meeting the Buddha, is initially reluctant to ask him anything for fear of saying the wrong thing, and so losing face! Indeed, at the end of the discourse, even after having gone for refuge, he tells the Buddha that he would in public show his respect to the Buddha in other ways than rising, so that he does not lose face before other brahmins! We have a very status-conscious brahmin here. (D 4,26/1:126), SD 30.5.

<sup>45</sup> I would like to mention *attainment*, too, but this is very subjective: however, see **Jaṭila S** (S 3.11/1:77-79, SD 14.11) & **Ṭhānāni S** (A 4.93/2:187-190 @ SD 14.12).

<sup>46</sup> For further discussion, see “**Me**”: **the problem of conceit**, SD 19.2a(2.3-4). Please note that I am *not* against those with a doctorate in the healing profession or the humanities (or any academically or professionally qualified person) speaking on Buddhism, but we should not confuse one qualification for another, that a turtle, because it swims in water, is also a fish. I am addressing a special problem in traditional Buddhist circles especially in Asia.

<sup>47</sup> On problem of personal status-consciousness in Buddhism, see eg **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a.

The point is that we need good teachers and better teachings. If we are without true teachers, the ego will be our teacher, but the selfish ego is a bad learner and a worse teacher! Or, perhaps we are self-propelled by a sense of psychological sublimation, an unconscious defence<sup>48</sup> rooted in a deep sense of guilt over our personality, or sexuality, or past “sins” and omissions. Or, worse, it makes us think we have already known enough, and to stop searching the scriptures, to question wise teachers, to consider the thoughts of others, or to look for the stillness within ourselves. Only as healed beings, or with some level of healing, will we be able to heal more beings.

The point is that even the Buddha, immediately after his awakening, seeks a teacher to bow to. And not finding such a teacher—for, who could be more spiritually liberated than a Buddha—he still feels that he should at least respect the Dharma.

One dwells in suffering if one is without respect, without deference (to another).<sup>49</sup> Now what ascetic or brahmin can I, honouring, respecting, dwell in dependence on?...

What now, if I, honouring, respecting this very Dharma, to which I have fully awakened, were to dwell in dependence on it? **(Gārava Sutta, S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3**

## 2 The Ambatṭha Sutta as propaganda

**2.1 DĪGHA NIKĀYA AND MISSIONIZING.** For any religion to succeed, it has to win followers and change lives. In short, and crudely put, it has to *propagandize*, that is, sell itself. The Buddha and the early saints often effectively propagate the Dharma by their own exemplary conduct. The wanderer **Upaka**, for example, is moved by the Buddha demeanour,<sup>50</sup> and in due course joins the order and becomes a non-returner.<sup>51</sup> Another famous example is that of **Assaji**, whose calm and radiant demeanour inspires the wanderer **Upatissa** (Sāriputta) to ask him about the spiritual life, and which in due course makes him (Sāriputta) the right-hand monk of the Buddha.<sup>52</sup>

A whole collection of accounts of the Buddha’s missionizing, especially by way of philosophical, social and inter-religious debates are found especially in **the Dīgha Nikāya**, the collection of “long discourse,” and the first of the five Nikayas. **Joy Manné**, in her analytical study of the divisions of the Pali Canon, explains the nature of the first Sutta collection, the Dīgha Nikāya, thus:

The early Buddhists had two important and urgent purposes. One was to gain converts and lay support; the other was to ensure the survival of their religion. Without success in both of these their Teaching would die out. How were they to realize these purposes? Obviously a body of (oral) literature was necessary. To attract convert the early Buddhists first needed an audience. For that their initial communications had at least to be attractive and entertaining.

Of the first four Nikāyas by far the most entertaining texts occur in the [Dīgha Nikāya].<sup>53</sup> The most dramatic Debates are there, for example, in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta (D 2), the Ambatṭha Sutta (D 3), and the Soṇa,daṇḍa Sutta [D 4], and the most philosophical debates, eg in the Kassa-pa Sīhanāda Sutta (D 8) and the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta (D 9). The most magical and inspirational legends are also found there, for instance, that of the lives of the Buddha in the Mahāpadāna Sutta (D 14), the legend of Mahāvijita’s sacrifice in the Kūṭadanta Sutta (D 5); the legend of Brahmā’s respect for the Buddha in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta (D 11); the history of the town Kusinārā in the Mahā-

<sup>48</sup> On unconscious defence mechanisms, see **Khaluṅka S** (A 8.14/4:190-195), SD 7.9; also SD 24.10b (2).

<sup>49</sup> *Dukkham kho agāravo viharati appaṭṭisso* (S 1:139 = A 2:20; qu at MA 2:136; also V 2:89 = D 3:244 = M 2:245 = Vbh 381).

<sup>50</sup> V 1:8; M 1:171; J 1:81; DhA 4:71 f; cf Miln 235; UA 54; Kvu 289; Mvst 3:326.

<sup>51</sup> MA 2:189-91; ThiA 220 ff; cf S 1:35, 60. See SD 12.1(4-5).

<sup>52</sup> V 1:39-42; Ap 24; VA 965; MA 2:192, 346; AA 1:157; J 1:83, 85; DhA 1:91, 4:75.

<sup>53</sup> Monks would, of course, not have been excluded from this entertainment. Without radio or TV, society at the time of the Buddha was dependent on locally generated entertainment. The Brahmajāla Sutta (D 1) give a rather full catalogue of what was available. But monks were excluded from or at least discouraged from participating in all of these forms. Only one form of entertainment was available to them: the hearing and reciting of suttas. The Brahmajāla leaves nothing over but this, I think. (Manné’s fn)

sudassana Sutta (D 17); the Buddha's encounter with the *gandhabba* Janavasabha, the claimed reincarnation of King Bimbisāra, with its tale of rebirth and life amongst the gods (D 18); and so forth.

My argument is that for the purposes of propaganda, to attract converts and lay-supporters to the new religion and to spread its message, it was necessary to have a particular type of communication. This would have to be entertaining, viz, stories and accounts, capable of spreading the fame of the founder, of giving some idea of his character and attainments, of providing enough of the Teaching to arouse interest and to inspire conversion, and, not the least, containing accounts of converts and supporters from many different areas of society to serve as examples to the present audience. The Dīgha Nikāya conforms to this requirement. This may be why the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta found its way into this collection. (Manné 1990:38; emphases added)

**2.2 ANTI-BRAHMIN PROPAGANDA.** That the Ambaṭṭha Sutta works as an effective propaganda against the brahmins is clear and unmistakable:

- (1) The Buddha is said to be endowed with the 32 marks of the great man, which first attracts the attention of the sign-reader Pokkhara, sāti.
- (2) The brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha plays the role of the Buddha's antagonist and suffers humiliation from his own teacher.
- (3) The sutta recounts the humble beginnings of the Ambaṭṭhas and the "noble" origins of the Sakyas.
- (4) The Buddha is presented as a master of the *brahmodya*, the Vedic institution of religious debate [3.3].

Let us examine each of these points in turn.

**2.2.1 The Buddha's 32 marks of the great man.** The eminent brahmin and sign-reader Pokkhara, sāti is first attracted to the Buddha because the latter is said to be endowed with the 32 marks. The full list of the marks appears in the following suttas:<sup>54</sup> **the Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (D 30),<sup>55</sup> **the Mahāpadāna Sutta** (D 14)<sup>56</sup> and **the Brahmāyū Sutta** (M 91).<sup>57</sup> The 32 marks are alluded to in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, where it is stated that the 32 marks form a part of Ambaṭṭha's education [§ 1.3], and that they are found in the

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<sup>54</sup> **The 32 major marks of the great man** (*mahā purisa, lakkhaṇa*): (1) He has feet with a level tread; (2) On the soles of his feet are wheels, each with a thousand spokes, all rimmed and hubbed, complete in every way; (3) He has projecting heels; (4) He has long fingers; (5) He has soft, tender hands and feet; (6) His fingers and toes are net-like [reticulated or evenly spaced]; (7) His ankles are high-raised [over the exact middle of the tread]; (8) His legs are shapely like an antelope's; (9) Without stooping, he can touch and rub his knees with both hands at once; (10) His male organ is covered with a sheath; (11) He has a golden complexion; (12) His skin is so delicate and smooth that no dust or dirt settle on it; (13) His body-hairs are separate, one to a pore; (14) They grow upwards, bluish-black like collyrium, curling to the right; (15) His body is perfectly straight [like Brahmā's]; (16) He has seven convex surfaces [on hands, feet, shoulders, trunk]; (17) The front of his body is like a lion's; (18) There is no hollow between his shoulders; (19) His proportions are like a banyan tree: his arm-span equals his height; (20) The curve of his shoulders is evenly rounded; (21) He has a perfect sense of taste; (22) His jaw is like a lion's; (23) He has forty teeth; (24) His teeth are even; (25) There are no spaces between his teeth; (26) His canine teeth are very bright; (27) His tongue is very long and flexible [able to touch his forehead]; (28) His perfect voice [like Brahmā's] is sweet like the sound of a *karavīka* [Indian cuckoo]; (29) His eyes are deep blue; (30) His eye-lashes are [long and shapely] like a cow's; (31) The hair between his eye-brows is white, soft like cotton-down; (32) His head is shaped like a royal turban (D 14/2:17 f, 136 f; D 30/3:142 ff). See: E J Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, 3rd ed 1949:21, 38-43 (Asita), 218-226, 260; E Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1988a:666-679. For details, see **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30), SD 36.9 Intro.

<sup>55</sup> D 30/3:143 f @ SD 36.9. According to **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30), these marks are entirely the result of past good deeds, and can only continue in the present life by means of current goodness.

<sup>56</sup> D 14/2:17-19; cf Mahā'vadāna Sūtra, ed Waldschmidt 101 f.

<sup>57</sup> M 91/2:136 f.



brahminical mantras (ie, the Vedas). Furthermore, in the Buddhist hagiographies, it is a brahmin who ascertains the 32 marks of the Buddha.<sup>58</sup>

For example, in the **Mahā'padāna Sutta** (D 14), it is the brahmins, “skilled in signs,” who examine the body of prince Vipassī and determine that he has the 32 marks of the great man.<sup>59</sup> Another famous example is found in the **Jātaka Nidāna**: eight of the 108 brahmin sages,<sup>60</sup> invited by the rajah Suddhodana, to foresee the Bodhisattva's future, are Vedic masters and sign-readers. Seven of them raise two fingers, prognosticating that the child Siddhattha would *either* become a universal monarch (Skt *cakravartī*), if he lives the household life, *or* a universal teacher, if he renounces the world. **Koṇḍañña**, however, raises only *one* finger and declares that the Bodhisattva is sure to renounce the world to become a world teacher.<sup>61</sup>

What is significant in all the accounts relating to the 32 marks, is that the sign-readers are always the brahmins, and the person endowed with *all* of them is always the Buddha. This is an effective application of the myth of the ideal man for the benefit of the kshatriyas. While the brahmins often declare themselves as the highest caste and boast of being born from the mouth of the cosmic man (*puruṣa*),<sup>62</sup> the Buddhists have invented the myth of the great man (*mahā,purisa*) to show that it is they who actually have the palpable proof of *a living cosmic man* in the *mahā,purisa*!<sup>63</sup>

**2.2.2 Ambaṭṭha Mānava as the Buddha's antagonist.** According to the Mānava Dharmaśāstra (10.8+47),<sup>64</sup> the Ambaṣṭha clan arose from the union of a brahmin father and a vaishya mother, and the clan name, in fact, was synonymous for a “mixed marriage” [1.3.1]. It is significant that we know Pokkhara,sāti's full name [1.2], but we know Ambaṭṭha only by his clan name, as *Ambaṭṭha Mānava*, “the youth Ambaṭṭha” or “the Ambaṭṭha youth.” In fact, his personal name is immaterial; for, this is a cosmic drama of awakening, and Ambaṭṭha is the *bāla*, the immature boy, the spiritually undeveloped protagonist of the sutta named after him.

The lesson of the drama is that we should not disrespect or look down on wisdom. To do so reflects the worst in us: we lack spiritual training and experience; and any wise teacher would disapprove of such insolence and hubris. For the concerned Buddhist audience of our times, listening to or reading the Ambaṭṭha Sutta brings to mind the self-proclaimed religious zealot or self-propelled drumbeater in Buddhist circles. If such self-centred tendencies prevail, he is likely to become a future Ambaṭṭha, whom a Pokkhara,sāti of the future would kick.

**2.2.3 The humble origins of the Ambaṭṭhas.** The Ambaṭṭha Sutta is the only canonical work that mentions the mythical rajah Okkāka and such details of the Sakyas' noble origins [§1.16.2].<sup>65</sup> The purpose here is to show the origin and perpetuation of the pure bloodline (*jāti*) of the Sakya kshatriyas. So adamant are they in doing so, that they went to the extent of committing incest, the brothers marrying

<sup>58</sup> Eg, D 1:89, 114, 120; A 1:163; M 2:136; Sn 600, 1000.

<sup>59</sup> D 14,1.1/2:1.

<sup>60</sup> That is, Rāma (father of Uddaka Rāma,putta), Dhaja, Lakkhaṇa, Mantī, Koṇḍañña (youngest of these eight, but the eldest of the five monks), Bhoja, Suyāma, and Sudatta.

<sup>61</sup> J 1:55 f.

<sup>62</sup> Puruṣa Śūkta, hymn 10.90 of Ṛgveda. This is the oldest ref to the *puruṣa*. See further **Aggañña S** (D 27.3/3:81) n, SD 2.19.

<sup>63</sup> For details, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7 (4.1) n; see also **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30/3:142-179), SD 36.9 Intro.

<sup>64</sup> See Olivelle 2004.

<sup>65</sup> **Okkāka** is thrice mentioned (without further detail) in Sn: **Brāhmaṇa,dhammika S** (Sn 2.7/302b+306f) , 991c), a text dealing with the true duties of the brahmins, and the late Vatthu,gāthā of **Pārāyaṇa Vagga** (Sn 5.1/991c). **The Apadāna** also mentions Okkāka at least a dozen times (as *Okkāka,sambhava* in a time-marker stock): Sāriputta (Ap 1.113/1:22), Mahā Kassapa (Ap 3.12/1:2), Upāli (Ap 6.13/1:38, 43/1:40), Añña Koṇḍañña (Ap 7.11/1:49), Khadira,-vaniya Revata (Ap 9.9/1:52), Kuṇḍa,dhana (Ap 31.8/1:82), Sonā Koḷivisa Therāpadāna (Ap 42.14/1:94), Sa,parivāra Chatta Dāyaka (Ap 330.8/1:266), Pilinda,vaccha (Ap 388.82/307), Nānāthavika (Ap 481.21/2:423), Vakkali (Ap 529.16/2:466), Kāḷudayī (Ap 543.13/2:501).

their own sisters.<sup>66</sup> The brahmins, however, in accepting halfbloods, are, as such, not as strict at the kshatriyas [§§1.24-27].

The sutta redactors present Ambaṭṭha Mānava as knowing, or perhaps forgetting, his humble origins in a mixed marriage.<sup>67</sup> But on being told so by the Buddha, Ambaṭṭha refuses to own up, which clearly is his moral weakness. The Buddha's purpose is not that of humiliating Ambaṭṭha; for, when the other brahmin youths, shocked at the revelation (surprisingly, they do not know of Ambaṭṭha's origins), denounce him, the Buddha tells them not to be too harsh in passing judgement.

It should be noted, declares the Buddha, that the halfblood child born of the ancient mixed marriage was none other than the mighty rishi Kaṇha. Furthermore, this great rishi, in due course, by way of his great psychic power (the Ambaṭṭha mantra, DA 1:266), convinced the rajah Okkāka (the ancestor of the Sakyas) to give the hand of his daughter, Madda,rūpī, to him (Kaṇha) in marriage [§1.23].

The irony or wry humour here is often missed: rishis are best when they are celibate, but here is one who chooses to marry. For a rishi to fall in love with a woman (or anyone) surely belies his attainments; for, how could a highly attained rishi fall into lust? But Kaṇha is not the first or only such loving rishi. There is another even more famous case: that of Upaka, but who in due course becomes a monk and then an arhat.<sup>68</sup> Apparently other systems do not work as well as the Buddha's training. This is the kind of tale that would rivet and liven up an Indian audience, even today!

The main case against Ambaṭṭha, however, is that he *knowingly* holds back the truth, refusing to accept the account of his humble origins. Obviously, his teacher Pokkhara,sāti is well aware of his pupil's humble origins, in which case the teacher would be more to be blamed for not training the pupil well, or worse, for shielding a pupil's failure [§§1.11, 2.5].

**2.2.4 The Buddha as a master of the *brahmodya*.** The most important secret of the Buddha's success is his protean teaching style, or to be more exact, his debating ability. In fact, the dramatic debate that dominates the first part of the Ambaṭṭha Sutta closely follows the principles of the Upanishadic *brahmodya* or formal philosophical debate [3.3], replete with the threat (as it were) of head-shattering! [§§1.-9b-1.28; 4.1]. Indeed, as **Joy Manné** has pointed out, 18 of the 34 Dīgha suttas centre around such debates, and her observation is helpful:

A sutta can be categorised as a Debate when it has at least the following features: two opponents, viz, the Buddha or a senior monk, and an adversary; a challenge; a refutation; and an admission of defeat. (Joy Manné 1990:45)

AS BLIND AS AN EVANGELIST. Ambaṭṭha, however, does not admit defeat even in the face of the overwhelming facts of his humble origins, and despite the Buddha's admonition. As such, he may be as dishonest or blind as a modern evangelical zealot trying to talk down others into his faith when he is himself

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<sup>66</sup> It is important to note here that the Buddha does *not* approve of **incest**. Apparently, incest was not a taboo in such ancient times. In fact, it is practised in some societies, such as ancient Egypt and Achaemenid Persia, for sake of preserving the bloodline. The Buddha's wry humour is evident here. Apparently, by the Buddha's time (certainly by commentarial times), incest was unacceptable. For, we have an account of an inter-tribal quarrel, where the Koliyas derided the Sakyas as "descendants of those who married their own sisters, like dogs or foxes!" (DhA 3:254). In the Chinese translations, this sibling marriage was replaced by those "within the third degree of kinship, that is, uncles and nieces, and aunts and nephews" (Nakamura 2000: 33). The Dīgha Comy actually classes *incest* as "abnormal lust" (*adhamma,rāga*), ie, "lust between mother and mother's sister and father's sister and maternal uncle's wife and other such improper situations" (*mātā mātuucchā pituucchā mātulanī ti ādike ayutta-ṭ,ṭhāne rāgo*) (DA 3:853): see SD 8.7 (2).

<sup>67</sup> That is, between a kshatriya man and a slave-girl (presumably a shudra) [1.3.1], or, according to brahminical literature, between a brahmin and a vaishya woman (Mānava Dharma,śāstra 10.8+47).

<sup>68</sup> On Upaka, see V 1:8; M 1:171; J 1:81; DhA 4:71 f; cf Miln 235; UA 54; Kvu 289; Mvst 3:326. See SD 12.1 (4-5).

unable to see the beam of faithlessness in his own eye.<sup>69</sup> None is so blind as an evangelist who is unwilling or unable to see or value the true pearls of inner stillness that are cast before him.

Ambaṭṭha refuses to admit his “failings,” even after the Buddha reassures everyone present that there is a radiant silver lining to that cloud, that is, Ambaṭṭha’s ancestor, the powerful rishi Kaṇha [§1.23]. Ambaṭṭha’s preoccupation with the 32 marks deafens him from responding to the Buddha’s invitation to question him [§2.10.2].

Apparently, Ambaṭṭha, already harbouring a dislike for the Sakyas [§§1.13-15], is intent on debating with the Buddha, even knocking him down (just as Nigrodha boasts of in **the Udumbarikā Sutta**).<sup>70</sup> Perhaps that is why Ambaṭṭha brings his own retinue comprising of “some” (*sambahula*) other brahmin youths [§1.6]. As noted by Manné, references to the audience are another frequent feature of debate suttas (1990: 49).

A STUDENT’S ARROGANCE. Further notes **Brian Black**, “another potential marker that this [Ambaṭṭha Sutta] is a debate *sutta* is that both Ambaṭṭha and Pokkharasāti are depicted riding chariots (2007b:17), “the motor-cars” of the Vedic elite.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the young Ambaṭṭha goes against his own teacher’s instructions and insubordinates another teacher. As **Joy Manné** observes: “This detail shows that Ambaṭṭha is so presumptuous as to intend to challenge the Buddha, rather than simply to make the inquiry about him that he has been sent by his teacher to make” (1993:53).

The debate section of the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, that is, the *brahmodya* between the Buddha and Ambaṭṭha [§§1.9b-1.28], is uncharacteristic of the Buddha’s usual Dharma teaching methods. Although the Buddha (or the sutta redactors) presents the whole *sāmañña,phala* teaching to Ambaṭṭha, he is apparently unimpressed, or simply distracted (reflecting a bad pupil, by Vedic and by canonical standards).

THE FIRST 13 DĪGHA SUTTAS. It is a famous fact that all the 13 suttas of the first chapter of the Dīgha Nikāya, **the Sīla-k,khandha Vagga**, have the *sāmañña,phala* passage, all identical in form, each varying only by way of presentation.

<b><u>Dīgha Nikāya sutta</u></b>	<b><u>Audience</u></b>	<b><u>Result</u></b>
D 1 <u>Brahma,jāla Sutta</u>	the monks	rejoice in the teaching
D 2 <u>Sāmañña,phala Sutta</u>	rajaḥ Ajāta,sattu (“rejoiced”)	“the monks rejoiced”
D 3 <u>Ambaṭṭha Sutta</u>	mainly Ambaṭṭha (reprimanded)	Pokkhara,sāti etc take refuge
D 4 <u>Soṇa,daṇḍa Sutta</u>	the brahmin Soṇa,daṇḍa	takes refuge
D 5 <u>Kūta,danta Sutta</u>	the brahmin Kūta,danta	takes refuge, gains Dharma-eye
D 6 <u>Mahāli Sutta</u>	Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi	“rejoiced”
D 7 <u>Jāliya Sutta</u>	the wanderers Maṇḍissa & Jāliya	rejoice in the teaching
D 8 <u>Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta</u>	the naked ascetic Kassapa	renounces, later becomes arhat
D 9 <u>Poṭṭha,pāda Sutta</u>	the brahmin Poṭṭhapāda & Citta the elephant trainer’s son	Poṭṭhapāda takes refuge renounces, later becomes arhat
D 10 <u>(Ānanda) Subha Sutta</u>	Subha Todeyya,putta	takes refuge
D 11 <u>Kevaḍḍha Sutta</u>	the houselord Kevaḍḍha	rejoices in the teaching
D 12 <u>Lohicca Sutta</u>	the layman Lohicca	takes refuge
D 13 <u>Tevijja Sutta</u>	Vāseṭṭha & Bhāra,dvāja	take refuge

From the above list, we can see that *only three suttas*—nos 5, 8, and 9 (underscored)—record the audience as attaining to the path as a result of the Buddha’s instructions. Suttas 1 and 2 are taught to “the

<sup>69</sup> This is an allusion to the Bible: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but don’t consider the beam that is in your own eye?” (Matt 7.3). One of the psychological explanations for the zealotry of an aggressive evangelist in converting others is to remind himself that he, after all, *does* have faith in his religion: this is known as the defence mechanism of reaction formation, or even compensation, where there is really a lack of faith.

<sup>70</sup> D 3,5/3:38 @ SD 1.4.

<sup>71</sup> Patrick Olivelle 1974:90 n17. See also Black 2007b:17 f. However, scholars like HW Bodewitz warns against an “over-sensitiveness with regards to chariots” (1974:90 n17). For example, despite the fact that Pokkhara,sāti drives a chariot to meet the Buddha, he does not challenge the Buddha, but shows him every respect.

converted,” that is, the monks. At the end of Suttas 3, 4, 10, 12, and 13, the listeners “take refuge,” that is, become lay followers. Suttas 6 and 11 are teachings given to laymen, who merely “rejoice” in them. Sutta 7 is identical to sutta 6, except for the ending, mentioning that the two wanderers “rejoice” in the teaching.

Only in **the Ambaṭṭha Sutta**, the protagonist, Ambaṭṭha Māṇava, neither rejoices in the teaching nor takes refuge as a lay follower. In fact, the last we hear of him is that he is ignominiously kicked by his teacher, Pokkhara, sāti [§2.15].

However, in all the Sīla-k, khandha Vagga suttas (except for the Ambaṭṭha Sutta), the audience either rejoices in the teaching, become lay followers or attain to the path. Even in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, Pokkhara, sāti (Ambaṭṭha’s teacher), his family and retinue take refuge as lay followers. Although there is no mention of Ambaṭṭha in Pokkhara, sāti’s audience with the Buddha, it is possible that he is present, too, despite what happened to him. This is hinted in Buddhaghosa’s remark, “Whereas before he would, as charioteer, ride the chariot with his teacher, after being deprived of that status, he went his way on foot before the chariot.”<sup>72</sup> In that case, all is not lost for Ambaṭṭha.

### 3 Brahminical background to the Ambaṭṭha Sutta

**3.1 THE UPANIṢADS.** Buddhism arose in India during the 6th-5th century BCE, a period of great spiritual and intellectual turmoil, and political growth (especially the beginnings of the Indian empire that would culminate in Asoka’s time). An understanding of the religious background of these times is helpful in a better understanding of the early Buddhist teachings, such as the Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Hinduism scholar, **Brian Black**, for example, has noted that one of the most colourful characters of Indian religious philosophy, called Śveta, ketu, appears as Ambaṭṭha, or is used by the Buddha, to bring across important Buddhist teachings. More specifically, this is the “young” Śveta, ketu, an arrogant, impetuous but ignorant brahmin youth, of the Upaniṣads [3.2].

The Sanskrit term *upaniṣad* comes from *upa-* (near, close up to), *ni-* (down) and *sad* (to sit), that is, “sitting down close to” a spiritual teacher to receive instructions in the teacher-pupil (*guru, śisya*) tradition. The teachings of such nature are compiled and formalized as **the Upaniṣads**, which form a vital part of the Vedas, and as such of the Hindu scriptures. They primarily discuss religious philosophy, meditation, and the nature of God, and form the spiritual core and putative goal of Vedantic religion, hence are known as *Vedānta* (“the end or culmination of the Vedas”).

The Upanishads evolved over a long period of Indian religious literary development spanning over two millennia. The Bṛhad Āraṇyaka (BAU) and Chāndogya Upanishads (ChU), for example, probably date to the Brāhmaṇa period (before 7th century BCE), while the youngest Upanishad may date to the medieval or early modern period. Like all religious texts, the Upanishads are subject to various interpretations and uses, depending on the “branch” (*śākhā*, literally “branch” (as of a tree) or “arm”) or school of the Vedas, or to the traditional texts followed by a school.

The related term, *carāṇa*, meaning “conduct of life” or “behavior,” is also used to refer to a school or branch of any of the Vedic tradition. Monier-Williams says that “although the words *carāṇa* and *śākhā* are sometimes used synonymously, yet *carāṇa* properly applies to the sect or collection of persons united in one school, and *śākhā* to the traditional text followed, as in the phrase *śākhām adhite*, he recites a particular version of the Veda.” (SED: śākhā).

In the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, the Buddha skillfully presents the *sāmañña, phala* teachings by way of *carāṇa* (ts) (conduct) and *vidyā* (P *vijjā*) (knowledge or wisdom), instead of the more usual threefold training of moral virtue (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).<sup>73</sup> *Carāṇa* here encompasses both moral virtue and mental concentration. Both these terms (*carāṇa* and *vidyā*) are familiar to Ambaṭṭha, that is, to the brahmins, to whom such teachings are directed.

<sup>72</sup> *Yañ ca so pubbe ācariyena saddhiṃ ratham āruhitvā sārathi hutvā agamāsi, tam pi’ssa thānam acchinditvā rathassa purato padasā yev’assa gamanam akāsi* (DA 1:277).

<sup>73</sup> See §2.2a header n.

**3.2 ŚVETA, KETU AND AMBAṬṬHA.** **Brian Black**, in a very informative and thoughtful study, says that an understanding of the literary connection between ancient brahmanical literature and the early Buddhist texts is useful in better understanding various Buddhist narratives in the early suttas (2007b:30, 31n).<sup>74</sup> Black, in fact, shows how the Ambaṭṭha Māṇava story is closely linked to that of the young Śveta, ketu, “the spoiled little brat”<sup>75</sup> of the Upaniṣads. Black’s thesis is “that Śvetaketu’s appearance in the early Buddhist literature has important implications for how we view the relationship between the Upaniṣads and early Buddhist narratives.”

Black builds on the work of **Patrick Olivelle**, who has done an insightful literary analysis of the Śveta, ketu story that appears in three different Upaniṣads, where he maintains his “proud and impetuous image” (1996:67). Olivelle argues that the various versions of the Śvetaketu story “are not accidental creations but deliberate literary inventions” (1999:46). From Black’s paper, we have the following concordance of Śveta, ketu’s appearances in ancient brahminical literature:<sup>76</sup>

- |                                         |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.2.1-16    | Uddālaka, Śveta, ketu and the rajah;                    |
| (2) Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.3.1-5.10.10    | Uddālaka, Śveta, ketu and the rajah;                    |
| (3) Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 1.1-2            | Uddālaka, Śveta, ketu and the rajah;                    |
| (4) Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 2.239            | he feels jealousy when Jala becomes purohit;            |
| (5) Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta, sūtra 19.29.6-11 | (as in the preceding); and                              |
| (6) Mahābhārata 3.132-134               | feels jealousy when his father adopts nephew Aṣṭāvakra. |

The narrative episode of the arrogant young Śveta, ketu, his father Uddālaka Āruni (or Gautama), and the rajah Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, is the only one that recurs in first three Upaniṣads. Olivelle says that they all give a negative portrayal of the *young* Śveta, ketu.<sup>77</sup>

The Upaniṣadic tale of Śveta, ketu and his father, Uddālaka, however, is apparently known to the early Buddhists. Both of them figure in their own Jātaka story—the **Seta, ketu Jātaka** (J 377) and the **Uddālaka Jātaka** (J 487)—both relating to the same occasion, but told from their separate narrative viewpoints.<sup>78</sup> They relate the tale of how a wise outcaste (*caṇḍāla*) outwits and shames an arrogant Udicca (“northern”) brahmin youth, Seta, ketu, and of his wise and compassionate father, Uddālaka.

The first three versions of the Śveta, ketu are closely related, but it is **the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka** that has the most similarities with the Ambaṭṭha Māṇava account of the Ambaṭṭha Sutta. According to Black, the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, as such, is “a retelling of the Śvetaketu story”:

Both Śveta, ketu and Ambaṭṭha are depicted as brahmin students who are young and arrogant as they approach the domain of a non-brahmin. In the case of Śvetaketu, he is rude in his encounter with the king, whereas Ambaṭṭha is disrespectful to the Buddha. In both cases the young brahmin leaves the non-brahmin after being defeated in debate, without having learned from him a valuable teaching. Finally, both brahmins are replaced by their teachers, who in contrast are more refined and humble. The parallels do not end with the similarities between Śvetaketu and Ambaṭṭha, as both stories feature the same three central characters: a brahmin student, his teacher/father, and a non-brahmin, as well as a fourth “character” in the teaching offered at the end of the tale.

(Brian Black 2007b:2)

In the Upaniṣad tale, Śveta, ketu seeks to ask the kind and generous rajah Jaivali Pravāhaṇa (or Citra Gāṅgyāyani) of the Pañcālas questions on secret religious teachings known only to the kshatriyas, but

<sup>74</sup> Refs to Black’s paper follows the pre-publication draft (paginated 1-33) that he has kindly sent me. Most of this section is based on his instructive paper.

<sup>75</sup> Patrick Olivelle 1999:46, 69, or “spoiled brat,” 63, 67.

<sup>76</sup> See Olivelle 1999:47 for a schematic view of the Śveta, ketu literary context & 1999:54-57 for a concordance of parallel passages of the three Upaniṣad versions of the Śveta, ketu story.

<sup>77</sup> For a recent retelling of the Śveta, ketu story, see Karlina Mclain 2007. On Uddālaka Āruṇī & Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, see P Olivelle 1996:xxxiv-lx.

<sup>78</sup> J 377/3:232-237 & J 487/4:292-304 respectively. See Black 2007b:3.

Śveta, ketu's ignorance and arrogance get in his way. His patient and humble father, Uddālaka Āruṇi, however, in due course becomes the rajah's pupil and learns those secret teachings. In the Buddhist account, Ambaṭṭha is sent on an errand to meet the Buddha and ascertain that he has all the 32 marks of the great man [§1.5].

The Brhad Āraṇyaka account opens with Śveta, ketu barging into the rajah's presence, awkwardly interrupting his meal, while he is being entertained (*paricārayamāṇam*)<sup>79</sup> by palace women. Ambaṭṭha, however, starts off on a right foot: on arriving at the Buddha's residence, he asks for the Buddha, and first approaches with proper decorum [§1.8-1.9.1]. On personally meeting the Buddha, the brahmin youths accompanying Ambaṭṭha exchange pleasantries with him, and then "sat down at one side."

Ambaṭṭha, however, does *not* do so. Instead, he arrogantly remains standing or paces up and down as he greets and speaks with the Buddha [§1.9.2]. Not only is this impolite, but it is also improper, as it is very inconvenient to carry a meaningful conversation when the two parties are on different levels, as it were!<sup>80</sup>

When the Buddha immediately inquires Ambaṭṭha of his strange behaviour [§1.10.1], he retorts with a series of accusations against the Sakyas, such as calling them "menials" (*ibbha*) and "blacks" (*kaṇha*) [§§1.10b-15]. The Buddha's reply is that Ambaṭṭha himself has forgotten his own humble origins, that is, he is descended from a mixed marriage between a kshatriya man and a slave girl [§§1.24-27], or, according to brahminical literature, between a brahmin and a vaishya woman (Mānava Dharma, śāstra 10.8+47).

The Buddha questions Ambaṭṭha whether he has heard this account of his own descent directly from his teacher, and that if he does not answer this "reasonable question" (*saha, dhammika pañha*), his head will shatter into seven pieces [§1.20; 4.1]. As Black observes:

Not only does the Buddha, with his ability to remember ancestral lineages, expose the impurity of Ambaṭṭha's family pedigree, but by asking this question directly to the young brahmin he also makes the accusation that Ambaṭṭha and his teachers are aware that their claim to superiority is false, but are knowingly suppressing the truth.  
(Brian Black 2007b:8)

In the Brhad Āraṇyaka and Chāndogya accounts, the rajah asks him five questions,<sup>81</sup> but he fails to answer any of them. The Brhad Āraṇyaka then says that the rajah invites him to stay, but spurning the invitation, he runs off (BĀU 6.2.3). In the Chāndogya account, the rajah scolds him for calling himself educated when he is unable to answer the questions, and he returns to Uddālaka and in turns blames his father. In the Kauṣītaki, the rajah asks Śveta, ketu only one questions, which he is unable to answer, but he

<sup>79</sup> This verb form usually means the serving of food, but has sexual connotations as well (Olivelle 1999:58 & n29): cf *paricārenti* at §2.10a n.

<sup>80</sup> In **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2), Ajāta, sattu, on meeting the Buddha for the first time as a rajah, initially *stands* and nostalgically surveys the peace pervading the community of monks assembled, and then, after cordial greetings, sits down at one side (D 2.12/1:50 @ SD 8.10). **Mahā Siha, nāda S** (D 8) opens with Acela Kassapa, having exchanged greetings with the Buddha, *standing* at one side, and apparently does so throughout the session. However, at the end of the teaching, he joins the order, and in due course becomes an arhat (D 8.1/1:161). In the case of **Ambaṭṭha**, his refusal to sit is expressly a show of his disrespect for the Buddha and the Sakyas. Ironically, his brash actions actually act as a foil to the Buddha's calm and wise response, thus increasing the latter's prestige. See Manné 1990:52.

<sup>81</sup> The 5 questions or "five fires" are: (1) Do you know on account of what, these people keep wandering on?" (*vettha yathemāḥ prajāḥ prayatyo vipratipadyantā iti*); (2) "Do you know how they return to this world?" (*vettho yathemāḥ lokam punar āpadyantā iti*); (3) "Do you know how the world is never filled full even though so many again and again go there?" (*vettho yathāsau loka evaṃ bahubhiḥ punaḥ punaḥ prayadbhir na saṃpūryatā iti*); (4) Do you know after how many offerings of the libation does this water, becoming a human voice, arise and speak?" (*vettho yatithyām āhutyām hutāyām āpaḥ puruṣa, vāco bhūtvā samutthāya vadantī iti*); (5) "Do you know the path or way leading to the devas, or leading to the fathers (the departed); that is, having done what does one walk the path that leads to the devas or that leads to the fathers?" (*vettho devayānasya vā pathaḥ pratipadam piṭṭyānasya vā | yat kṛtvā devayānam vā panthānam pratipadyante piṭṭyānam vā*) (BU 6.2.2). The answers are found at BU 6.2.9-13; ChU 5.3-10; KṣU 1.2. "The secret teaching" here, which the kshatriyas knew, but not the brahmins, is about rebirth. See Obeyesekera 2002:6-14.

tells the rajah that he will ask his father (the teacher) about it (and does so). In all these three accounts, Uddālaka admits, he too does not know the answer, and he decides to see the rajah himself, although Śveta,ketu refuses to do so.

The Buddhist version of the young Śvetaketu tale is more detailed and interesting. At this point, when Ambaṭṭha does not answer the Buddha's question on the third count, the sutta introduces the fearful figure of Vajrapani [4], threatening to hurl a huge mass of blazing iron at him, and the terrified Ambaṭṭha owns up [§1.21]. At this revelation, Ambaṭṭha's retinue of brahmin youth are "hurt, crestfallen, and enraged"—best informed by the term *āyasta*—that actually applies to Śveta,ketu, when rajah Jaivali charges that he is not *anu,śiṣṭa* (that is, he is uneducated) (ChU 5.3.4).

At this point, there are interesting differences between the Upaniṣadic and the Buddhist accounts. Neither the kind rajah Jaivali nor the Buddha punishes the young visiting student, but both of them offer to teach the student. Śveta,ketu however "spurns the invitation and runs off" (BU 6.2.3), while Ambaṭṭha, having accomplished what he has come for (ascertaining the Buddha's 32 marks), mounts his chariot and leaves [§2.12]. Both the brahmin youths return to their respective teachers. The patient and humble father-/teacher, Uddālaka, comforts Śveta,ketu, but the flabbergasted Pokkhara,sāti scolds and kicks Ambaṭṭha [§2.15].

Both brahmin teachers—Uddālaka and Pokkhara,sāti—on account of their humility and eagerness to learn, spiritually benefit from their new kshatriya teachers, the rajah Jaivali and the Buddha, respectively. According to the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka, Uddālaka formally requests to become a student of rajah Jaivali (BU 6.2.7).<sup>82</sup> Pokkhara,sāti, his family and retinue declare themselves as the Buddha's followers [§2.22]. While Uddālaka learns the five fires and the two ways of the dead,<sup>83</sup> Pokkhara,sāti learns the four noble truths and becomes a streamwinner [§2.21].

The lesson of both tales is remarkably the same. While Vedic studentship (*brahma,carya*) is central to the entire Upaniṣadic system, for the Buddha's system the "holy life" (*brahma,cariya*) well-lived is the key to spiritual liberation.<sup>84</sup> Both Śveta,ketu and Ambaṭṭha can be characterized as foolish and arrogant students, lacking respect for learning, but their teachers are humble and wise in their eagerness to learn despite their high status.<sup>85</sup> As the Buddha declares in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), we must have the desire to learn,<sup>86</sup> otherwise, we will be caught in the mindset of "spoiled little brats" like the young Śveta,ketu or Ambaṭṭha.

**3.3 THE BRAHMODYA.** The early Buddhist equivalent of the *brahmodya* is the *kathojja*,<sup>87</sup> but they are not synonyms. While the *brahmodya* is ritualized philosophical debate of the brahminical system, the *kathojja* (translated as "dispute, quarrel") is an open debate or verbal dispute, which is discouraged by the Buddha.<sup>88</sup> The *brahmodya* (or *brahma,vadya*) or ritualized philosophical debate of the ancient brahmins has been briefly mentioned above [2.2.4]. While in the Upaniṣads, debates are a way of showing the superiority of individual teachers such as Yājñā,vaikya, in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta we see the Buddha using the very same *brahmodya*, to show *his* superiority over the brahmins.

<sup>82</sup> See Olivelle 1996:xxxiv f; 1999:61.

<sup>83</sup> These teachings are those of the two kshatriyas, Jaivali (ChU 5.3-10) and Aśvapati (ChU 5.11-24).

<sup>84</sup> As stated in **Bālena Paṇḍita S** (S 12.19), "the wise has lived the holy life for the utter destruction of suffering." (S 12.19/2:23-25 @ SD 21.2)

<sup>85</sup> The good news is that the "young" Śveta,ketu will in due course become a "mature" Śveta,ketu, an authority in Vedic rituals: see Olivelle 1999:68 f. In the lineage of teachers at BU 6.5.3 and BU 6.4.3, Uddālaka is said to be the teacher of Yājñā,vaikya (one of the most important Vedic sages). If so, Śveta,ketu and Yājñā,vaikya were contemporaries, possibly even classmates. It is likely, too, that Ambaṭṭha is present amongst who take refuge with Pokkhara,sāti at the close of the sutta [1.3.2].

<sup>86</sup> *Ye keci sikkhā,kāmā ti*, D 2:101/3:58, 77; S 3:42, 5:154, 163, 164.

<sup>87</sup> *kathā + ujja* < Skt *udya* (Sn 823c); cf Pāṇini 3.1.106; SnA 672: -*ujja*-; prob backformation from \**kathodya*, by influence of Skt *brahmodya*. See Jayatilleke 1963:231 (§361).

<sup>88</sup> "One should abstain from debating [verbal dispute]" (*virame kathojjam*, Sn 838); Sn 828, 925; explained by Comy as *kathojjam vuccati kalaho...vivādo* ("a quarrel, a dispute...is called *kathojja*") (Nm 163).

Apparently, in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, *it is Ambaṭṭha Māṇava who initiates the debate with the Buddha*. He makes a grand entrance in his chariot, with a retinue of some of his young colleagues, and his initial display of hubris, clearly show that he is intent on challenging, or at least, rejecting, the Buddha's authority, not just to ascertain the 32 marks of the Buddha. **Brian Black** helpfully explains:

In addition to sharing features of debate with other Buddhist *suttas*, there are a number of details in the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* that are specifically related to accounts of debate in the Upanishadic literature. One such similarity is an emphasis on the debating techniques of its interlocutors. As I have argued elsewhere [2007a], an integral aspect of philosophical debate in the Upanisads is the attention paid to tactics. In the Upanishadic *brahmodya*, contestants win debates as much by how they conduct their arguments as by the particular discourses that they know.

Similarly, the Buddha defeats Ambaṭṭha, not because he convinces the young brahmin with Buddhist doctrine, but rather because of his method of argumentation. The Buddha employs a number of debating tactics that are characteristic of the ways that brahmins establish their knowledge in the Upanisads. In particular, the Buddha uses an etymology, appeals to the authority of ancient verses, and invokes the authority of Vedic sages. None of these debating tactics are usual methods of the Buddha, but he employs all of them as a way to demonstrate that he knows the Vedic tradition better than Ambaṭṭha knows it himself. (Brian Black 2007b:18; emphases added)

When Ambaṭṭha informs the Buddha that he is from the Kaṇhāyana stock, the Buddha, by way of explaining the etymology of *kaṇha* (“black”), that his ancestors were of mixed marriage that gave birth to a black child, appropriately names Kaṇha. While *etymology* deals with the origin of words, *genealogy* concerns the origins of lineages and families. The most comprehensive use of etymology and genealogy in debunking the brahmin claim to superiority is found in **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27), where originally the classes are *occupation-based*:

- |                                                    |                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| • The great elect (the popularly elected ruler)    | <i>mahā,jana,sammato ti <b>mahā,sammato</b>.</i>         |
| • The kshatriyas are lords of the fields           | <i>khattānam patī ti <b>khattiyo</b>.</i>                |
| • The rajahs bring joy to the people               | <i>dhammena pare rañjetī ti <b>rājā</b>.</i>             |
| • The brahmins keep away from evil                 | <i>pāpake akusale dhamme bāhentī ti <b>brāhmaṇā</b>.</i> |
| • The forest-dwelling meditators                   | <i>jhāyantī ti <b>jhayakā</b>.</i>                       |
| • The text-reciters (who do not meditate)          | <i>na dān'ime jhāyantī ti <b>ajjhayakā</b>.</i>          |
| • The vaishyas enjoy sex and keep prestigious jobs | <i>vissuta,kammante payojentī ti <b>vessā</b>.</i>       |
| • The shudras lead cruel, mean lives               | <i>ludd'ācārā khudd'ācārā ti <b>suddā</b>.</i>           |

The terms in bold print are their occupational class names (*akkhara*; Skt *akṣara*). Everyone at that time keeps to same moral code (*dhamma*; Skt *dharma*). As such, the class members are highly mobile; for, anyone who chooses to leave his class and become ascetics, would form their own “circle” (*maṇḍala*).<sup>89</sup> In both suttas—the Ambaṭṭha Sutta and the Aggañña Sutta—the haughty brahmins are charged: *you have forgotten your past!*<sup>90</sup>

After pointing out the inconsistencies in Ambaṭṭha's notions of brahminical superiority, the Buddha quotes an ancient verse—“*For those people who value clan, the kshatriya is the best in this generation; | But the one endowed with knowledge and conduct is the best amongst gods and humans*”—attributed the brahma Sanañ,kumāra (Skt *Sanat,kumāra*), one of the four mind-born sons of the Almighty Brahmā himself,<sup>91</sup> proclaiming the supreme social state of the kshatriya [§1.28].

The Buddha does not stop here; for, then he would be a mere politician promoting the supremacy of one group over all others. He bring the discussion to the intended level—he explains in great detail what

<sup>89</sup> B 27.20-29/3:92-97 @ SD 2.19.

<sup>90</sup> D 27,4/3:81 f @ SD 2.19; D 3.1.16/1:92 f.

<sup>91</sup> They are called the **4 Kumāras** (“sons”) or **Catuḥ,sana** (“the 4 beginning with *sana*”) in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa 2.7.5 (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.15.12), and named Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Saṇat,kumāra.



“knowledge and conduct” that would make *anyone* supreme. He goes on to expound the *sāmañña,phala*, that is, the fruits of recluship.

## 4 Head-shattering and Vajra,pānī

### 4.1 HEAD-SHATTERING

**4.1.1** The most dramatic moment of the Ambaṭṭha Sutta is when Vajrapani, the thunderbolt-wielding yaksha, appears, visible only to the Buddha and Ambaṭṭha, ready to hurl his mass of blazing iron at Ambaṭṭha if he fails to answer the Buddha’s “reasonable question” after the third time [§1.21]. Firstly, what is a “**reasonable question**” (*saha,dhammika pañha*)? The Commentaries gloss *saha,dhammika* as *sa,karaṇam*, “with reason” (AA 2:268), or as *sa,hetuko sa,kāraṇo*, “with cause, with reason” (DA 1:263). The sutta commentary notes that “even if he himself does not desire to answer, it must necessarily be clarified”<sup>92</sup> (id). In other words, it is a fair question, relevant to the discussion at hand, especially one that must be clarified before the discussion could usefully continue and conclude. In this sense, it can also be rendered as “fundamental question,” as **Brian Black** has done (2007b:8).

Furthermore, it is helpful to examine the term *saha,dhammika* in relation to the Sanskrit *saha,dharma*, “community of duty or law, common usage or characteristics” (SED), that is, a matter of common law, as Ambaṭṭha has effectively slandered against the Buddha and the kshatriyas: therefore, the truth must out. Understandably, for a *brahmodya* (brahminical philosophical debate) to proceed properly, fair questions have to be duly answered. In this case, Ambaṭṭha has made some grave charges against the kshatriyas, claiming that they are “menials, blacks,” and so on [§1.10.2], but the Buddha replies that actually it is Ambaṭṭha who really is menial and black, because of his humble beginnings [§1.16c; 1.3.2].

**4.1.2** By the Buddha’s questioning Ambaṭṭha directly regarding his humble origins, he also accuses both Ambaṭṭha and his teachers that they must be aware that their claim to superiority is false, and they are knowingly suppressing the truth. Understandably, Ambaṭṭha is caught in a rut: he has run out of arguments, and yet to admit to the charge would prove himself wrong. With anyone else less than the Buddha, Ambaṭṭha might perhaps get away with such a furtive silence.

The “reasonable question” is not asked only by the Buddha, but by any wise person.<sup>93</sup> However, if it is the Buddha who asks it, the implication is significant and beneficial in due course. Sadly, Ambaṭṭha chooses *not* to engage himself further with the Buddha. Indeed, like **Śveta,ketu**, in the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka, who spurns rajah Jaivali’s invitation to stay on and learn, and runs off,<sup>94</sup> Ambaṭṭha, too, having completed his errand, summarily leaves in his chariot [§2.12].

**4.1.3** And why does the Buddha threaten Ambaṭṭha with “head-shattering”: *etth’eva te sattadhā muddhā phalissati*, “your head will right here shatter into seven pieces!” [§1.20]? As far we know from extant Suttas, the Buddha is depicted as making this threat only *twice*.<sup>95</sup> The Buddha’s humour is at work here, and with his favourite audience, too!<sup>96</sup> This sutta is clearly directed at a brahmin audience. The

<sup>92</sup> *Attanā anicchantena pi vyākariṭabbo, avassam viṣṣajetabbo* (DA 1:263).

<sup>93</sup> Besides **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.21/1.94 f), the Buddha puts a *saha,dhammika pañha* to Saccaka (**Cūḷa Saccaka S**, M 35.14/1:231), but without any head-splitting threat (Vajra,pānī appears on his own); Ānanda puts it to Saṅgārava (**(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S**, A 3.60/1:170); and 10 such questions are found in connection with Citta the householder in the **Nigaṇṭha Nāṭa,putta S** (S 41.8/4:297-300).

<sup>94</sup> BU 6.2.3

<sup>95</sup> Ie, in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.20-21/1:94 f), SD 21.3 & **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35.13b/1:231), SD 26.5. Vajra,pānī, however, does not appear to Saṅgārava in **(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60/1:170) even when such a question is asked by Ānanda, but the Buddha himself intervenes to free Saṅgārava from the predicament. Similarly, ten “reasonable questions” are mentioned in **Nigaṇṭha Nāṭa,putta S** (S 41.8/4:297-300) without Vajra,pānī appearing.

<sup>96</sup> Most of the Buddha’s humour is directed at the brahmins’ pride, arrogance and immorality: see **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11.67-85/1:215-223): even Brahmā does not know the answer; **Aggañña S** (D 27.3-4/3:81 f), brahmins, like humans, are not born of God’s mouth, but of a woman’s womb; **Akkosaka S** (S 7.2/1:161-163): the gift not taken belongs to the giver; **Vasala S** (Sn 116, 117): the truly twice-born. See **The Buddha’s humour**, SD 43.1.

head-shattering threat is well known to the brahmins and, as evident here, to the early Buddhists and commentators.<sup>97</sup>

**Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3/1:87-110: with appearance of Vajrapāṇī)

- D 3,1.20 *te sattadhā muddhā phalissati* your head will shatter into seven pieces  
 D 3,1.20 *etth'ev'assa sattadhā muddhā phalissati* his head will shatter sevenfold right here  
 D 3,1.21 *etth'ev'assa sattadhā muddham phalissāmi* I will shatter his head sevenfold right here

**Cūḷa Saccaka Sutta** (M 35/1:227-237: with appearance of Vajrapāṇī)

- M 35,13 *assa sattadhā muddhā phalati* his head shatters into seven pieces  
 M 35,14 *assa sattadhā muddham phalissāmi* his head will shatter into seven pieces

**Candimā Sutta** (S 2.9/1:50)

- S 284\* *sattadhā me phale muddhā* my head will shatter into seven pieces  
**Vuṭṭhā Sutta** (A 9.11/4:373-378) the head will shatter sevenfold right there  
 A 9.11.6 *tatth'eva sattadhā muddhā phalati* (unless Sāriputta forgives the person)

**Verañja Sutta** (A 8.11.1/4:173)

- A 8.11.1 *muddhā pi tassa vipateyya* your head would split

**Pārāyaṇa Vagga Vatthu, gāthā** (Sn 976-1031) = **Cull, niddesa** (Nc 1)

- Sn 983 *sattame divase tuyham muddhā phalatu* in seven days your head will shatter  
*sattadhā* sevenfold  
 Sn 1025 *muddham muddhāhipātāṇ ca* about the head and head-falling:  
 Sn 1026<sup>98</sup> *avijjā muddhā ti jānāti* Know thus: ignorance is “the head.”  
*vijjā muddhāhipātīnī* Knowledge is “the head-falling.”  
*saddhā, sati, samādhīhi* With faith, mindfulness, concentration,  
*chanda, viriyena saṃyutta* Joined with will-power and effort.

**Dhammapada**

- Dh 72 *muddham assa vipātayaṃ* (knowledge and fame) shatter his head;

**Jātaka Nidāna, kathā**

- J 1:54 *sattadhā tassa muddhā phaleyya* your head would shatter into seven pieces;

**Jayaddisa Jātaka** (J 513/5:21-36)

- J 513/5:33 *muddhāpi tassa vipheyya sattadhā* his head will shatter into seven pieces;

**Paṇḍara Jātaka** (J 518/5:75-88)

- J 518/5:87 *muddhā te phalatu sattadhā*<sup>99</sup> may your head shatter into seven pieces;

**Sambhula Jātaka** (J 519/5:88-98)

- J 519/5:92 *muddhā hi sattadhā te phaleyya* for, his head will shatter into seven pieces;

**Mahā Suta, soma Jātaka** (J 537/5:456-511)

- J 537/5:493 *Ce muddhāpi tassa vipheyya*<sup>100</sup> *sattadhā* his head will shatter into seven pieces, too;  
*Be Ee muddhāpi tassa vipateyya sattadhā* his head will fall in seven pieces, too;

**Bhūridatta Jātaka** (J 543/6:157-219)

- J 543/6:213 *na tassa muddhā pi phaleyya*<sup>101</sup> *sattadhā* his head will not shatter sevenfold;

**Milinda, pañha**

- Miln 157 *phaleyya tassa muddhā satadhā vā* his head would shatter into seven pieces o  
*sahassadhā vā* a thousand pieces.

**4.1.4** According to **Stanley Insler**, the decapitation threat is given under two circumstances. The first is when one party accuses the other of not knowing the answers to the answers. The second is when “one

<sup>97</sup> See BAU 3.6.1, 3.9.27; cf 3.7.2; ChU 5.12.2; cf 1.3.26. See also H Nakamura, *Budda no kotoba* [The words of the Buddha, Jap tr of Sn] Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984:415-417.

<sup>98</sup> This is the Buddha's answer to Bāvarī's question on head-shattering.

<sup>99</sup> The full spell is *etena sacca, vajjena | muddhā te phalatu sattadhā*, “by the power of this truth, | may your head shatter into seven pieces!”

<sup>100</sup> Se *vipaleyya*.

<sup>101</sup> Ee *pi phaleyya*; Be Ce *vipheyya*

opponent concedes the superiority of the other and offers firewood as a gesture of asking to be the student of the opponent” (1989-90:97 f). And **Brian Black** suggests a third situation: “when one character uses the threat of head shattering to force his or her opponent into answering a direct question” (2007b:23).

As an example, Black quotes the encounter between Yājñavalkya and the Kuru-Pañcāla brahmins, whose leader Śākalya, is cursed by Yājñavalkya: *Murdha te vipatisyatī ti*, “Your head will fall!” if you cannot answer...he is unable to answer, so *tasya ha mūrdhā vipapāta*, “his head fell” (BU 3.9.26).<sup>102</sup> And it is this scenario, he proposes, that characterizes the Buddha’s challenge to Ambaṭṭha (id).

It should be noted, however, that in the brahminical threat, the head “will fall” (*vipatisyati*), but in the Buddhist case, it “will shatter” (*phalissati*). While in the brahminical situation, the decapitation occurs by itself as a result of a curse, in the Buddhist case, Vajrapani threatens to hurl his mass of blazing iron at the person [4.2]. However, in the brahminical context, the decapitation sometimes occurs literally, but in the Buddhist case, the threat has never been carried out, but is merely a face-saving device for the threatened party.



**Fig 4.2a.** Greek scroll supported by Indian Yaksha, Amaravati, 3rd cent CE, Tokyo National Museum. [§1.21.1]

**4.2 VAJIRA,PANI.** We meet **Vajira,pāṇī** (P) or **Vajra,-pāṇī** (Skt) [Fig 4.2.1]—anglicized as Vajrapani —on only two occasions, as a yaksha (a tutelary spirit), in the Pali Canon (as a collection), that is, in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta [§1.21] and to the Saccaka Nigaṇṭha,putta in **the Cūḷa Saccaka Sutta** (M 35), when they, separately, are thrice asked a *saha,dhammika pañha*. Although “reasonable questions” are asked in other suttas, Vajrapani does not appear there because they are not asked by the Buddha. In fact, he is visible only to the Buddha and the person questioned. [4.1]

Vajrapani apparently also appears in **the Mahā,samaya Sutta** (D 20), a late text on protective chants, where he is called Vajira,hattha (“thunderbolt hand”).<sup>103</sup> Comy says that he is Sakra, king of the gods (*Sakka Deva,rāja*, MA 2:277). In Vedic mythology, the thunderbolt (Skt *vajra*; P *vajira*) is Indra’s weapon.<sup>104</sup> In Buddhist mythology, Indra or Sakra is variously called Inda or Sakka (Skt Śakra), and wields the same weapon.<sup>105</sup> Buddhaghosa, understandably, identifies Vajira,pāṇī with Sakka (anglicized as Sakra), and describes the fierce form he assumes as Vajrapani. This is the task that Sakra promises before Brahmā, on the occasion of his inviting the Buddha to teach the Dharma (V 1:5 f).<sup>106</sup>

**The Aya,kūṭa Jātaka** (J 347) is an account of how Sakra makes the same promise to protect the Bodhisattva in a past life. In the distant past, the Bodhisattva is born as the crown prince of Brahma,datta, ruling in Benares. At that time, bloody animal sacrifices are often and regularly made to the yakshas. When the Bodhisattva sits on the Benares throne, he commands that all such sacrifices stop. The furious yakshas sent one of them to kill him.

The yaksha (unnamed) wields a huge mass of blazing iron above the Bodhisattva’s head as he sleeps, ready to strike him dead. Sakra’s seat heats up, and he rushes down and stands mid-air, wielding his thunderbolt over the yaksha’s head. The Bodhisattva then awakes but sees only the yaksha, who after being asked, tells the Bodhisattva his true intent, and that the fear of Sakra stops him from doing so. Sakra, having put the yaksha to flight, then declares that he would thenceforth protect the Bodhisattva.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See also Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.4.19 (SBE 44:53 n2): *asya puruṣya mūrdhā vipatet*, “Let this person’s head fall!” (in a debate). See Jayatilleke 1963: 238 & Insler 1989-90.

<sup>103</sup> D 20.12/2:259.

<sup>104</sup> Like Thor’s hammer, the famed Mjöllnir.

<sup>105</sup> In the west, Indra became the Donner (“Thunderer”) of the Teutonic (Germanic) tribes, the Porr (Porr) of Old Norse mythology, Old English Þunor (Punor), and in ancient Greece and Rome, he was associated with Zeus-Jupiter (Skt *dyaus.pitar*). Like Thor of Norse mythology, he is described in the Rigveda as red- or tawny-bearded (RV 10.23.4). See Rgveda 1.32.1-15.

<sup>106</sup> DA 1:264 (where he is said to be a yaksha, *yakkha*); MA 2:277; cf Divy 8.27.

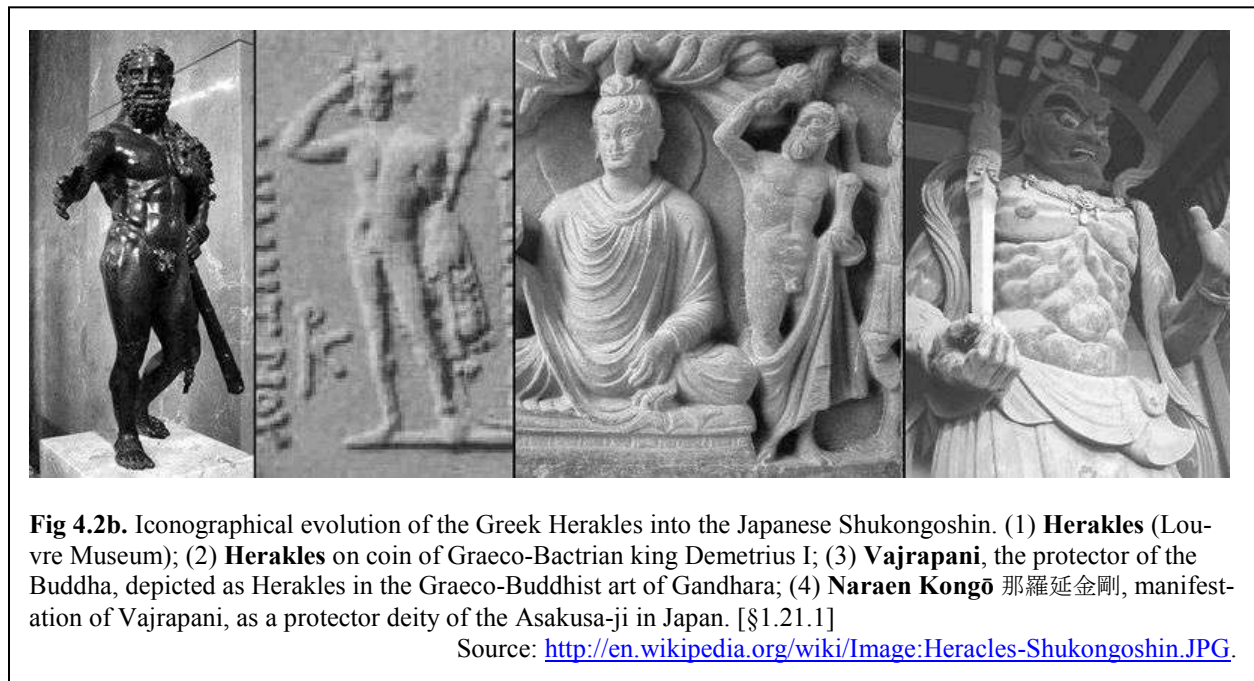
<sup>107</sup> J 347/1:145-147. Cf **Mahā Kaṇha J** (J 469/4:180-186), which shares the same origin story.

Sakra also wields his fiery “iron hammer” (*ayo, kūṭa*) in **the Sambula Jātaka** (J 519/5:92) and in **the Khaṇḍha, hāla Jātaka** (J 542/6:155). The fact that the yaksa wields an *aya, kūṭa* or *ayo, kūṭa*, “iron hammer”<sup>108</sup>—actually said to be the size of a house’s “peaked roof” (*kūṭa*)—reflects the importance of the metal (*aya, ayo*) during that period. Northern India during the Buddha’s time was undergoing the Iron Age, also known as the Indo-Gangetic Tradition (1200-300 BCE).<sup>109</sup> Magadha had rich deposits of iron ore which gave her the lead in technology to make better weapons to wage successful wars and build an empire.

The club is Hercules’ traditional weapon (in Greek mythology); the blazing iron is clearly Indian. Sakra, being a celestial deva, understandably has a more sophisticated weapon. In our own times, if the yaksha’s weapon were a bazooka, Sakra’s thunderbolt would be a powerful laser gun. Apparently, in due course, these two roles—the yaksha wielding a huge mass of blazing iron and Sakra with his thunderbolt—conflated into Vajrapani.

The yakshas (Skt *yakṣa*; P *yakkha*) are indigenous Indian nature-spirits or tutelary deities, who in Buddhist mythology are of two kinds: the terrestrial yakshas, who are like the rakshasas (*rākṣasa*), that is, a kind of cannibalistic ogre or demon that haunts the wilderness to waylay and devour unwary travellers. The celestial yakshas are the attendants of Vaiśravaṇa (P Vessavaṇa), the guardian divine king of the northern quarter. It is possible that the two are identical beings, differentiated only by their habitat.

Between the time of Alexander’s advent in northwest India (4th cent BCE) and the Muslim conquests (7th century), Buddhist art in northern India and its northern neighbours were heavily influenced by Greek art. The Greek Buddhists in the region indigenized the Buddha and Buddhist images, and recast



**Fig 4.2b.** Iconographical evolution of the Greek Herakles into the Japanese Shukongoshin. (1) **Herakles** (Louvre Museum); (2) **Herakles** on coin of Graeco-Bactrian king Demetrius I; (3) **Vajrapani**, the protector of the Buddha, depicted as Herakles in the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara; (4) **Naraen Kongō** 那羅延金剛, manifestation of Vajrapani, as a protector deity of the Asakusa-ji in Japan. [§1.21.1]

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Heracles-Shukongoshin.JPG>.

them after the Greek pantheon. Heracles (or Hercules in Latin), for example, became a protector of the Buddha, flanking him in the sculptured panels. In due course, the figure of Vajrapani merged with that of Hercules. And as Buddhism spread beyond India, the pantheon images evolved into colourful indigenous forms. In Tibet iconography, for example, Vajrapani is presented in a yellow peaceful form or a dark blue wrathful form. In East Asia, they are simply known as *vajra*, and are models for various martial art postures. [Fig 4.2.2]

<sup>108</sup> *Ayo, kūṭa*, “iron club.” See UA 435; J 1:108, 5:270, 276, 6:371; DhA 2:69; PvA 284.

<sup>109</sup> For refs on the Indian Iron Age, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron\\_Age\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age_India).

## 5 The Ambatṭha Sutta as prophecy

The section on “the ancient rishis” [§§2.8-10] is especially relevant today with its prophetic irony. Here the Buddha is pointing out to Ambatṭha that the brahmins of the day are not living the spiritual life as they should, like their ancestors, the great rishis of the past. The Ambatṭha Sutta is especially relevant today as the Buddha’s warning to Buddhist monastics from turning into veritable brahmins. The level of the *brahminization* of Buddhist monastics, especially in urban Buddhism, has reached such a dimension, that we should carefully reflect on the social and spiritual implications of this important sutta.

By “**brahminization**” I refer to these facts (where they are so) regarding monastics today:

- (1) They have become an elite group with substantial income, land, businesses, assets and/or status.
- (2) Their “religious” lives revolve mostly around rituals of some kind (especially ritual friendship, rituals for the dead, ritual presentation of scripture, or ritualized show of charity)<sup>110</sup> and simony.<sup>111</sup>
- (3) They are in some way gainfully employed, usually through the performance of rituals (esp for the dead), and do not have to pay taxes.<sup>112</sup>
- (4) Scripture and scriptural knowledge are *commodified* into academic qualifications and status markers.<sup>113</sup>

Urban monastics today, as a rule, have undergone a very drastic process of “**laicization**,” some of the characteristics of which are as follows:

- (5) They handle money, expect some kind of monetary payback for their services, have bank accounts and give the highest priority (tacitly at least) to fund-raising and control of wealth.<sup>114</sup>
- (6) They are often de facto owners or “executive officers” of monasteries, property and institutions. Monastic centres have become *sole proprietorships* run as very private limited religious enterprises working competitively to win as much of the Buddhist market as possible; in fact, for them financial success is of the first priority, and Buddhism is *commodified* to attract more wealth and power.<sup>115</sup>
- (7) They enjoy sensual pleasures very much like, often even more so than, the laity, and their conduct or activities are rarely directly questioned (in other words, they do not keep to the monastic discipline, and discourage the laity from learning about the Vinaya).<sup>116</sup>
- (8) The unquestioning loyalty of workers and members of many Buddhist group or organization workers to the leader or authority figure (as is common in groups) suggests the psychological process of transference<sup>117</sup> and counter-transference<sup>118</sup> powerfully at work, which are compounded

<sup>110</sup> H L Seneviratne, “Buddhist monks and ethnic politics,” *Anthropology Today* 17,2 April 2001:15-21.

<sup>111</sup> Angie CHEW Monksfield (President, Buddhist Fellowship), Official reply to “Stiff Competition,” Straits Times, 3 June 2006. [http://www.buddhistfellowship.org/bf\\_new/pages/interests/nib\\_reply\\_stiff%20competition.html](http://www.buddhistfellowship.org/bf_new/pages/interests/nib_reply_stiff%20competition.html).

<sup>112</sup> “[B]rahmins always get paid, whether they teach or not” (Brian Black 2007), “For example, in the Chāndōya Upaniṣad (5.11-24), Aśvapati offers to pay Uddālaka Āruṇi and a number of other brahmin householders the same amount for receiving a teaching from him as he is paying the ritual priests for actually performing a sacrifice. For further examples and discussion see Black [2007a].” (fn 18)

<sup>113</sup> TAN Dawn Wei & Mavis TOH, “Is the Buddha relic here the real McCoy?” *The Sunday Times* (Singapore), 15 July 2007, “News” pp2-3

<sup>114</sup> See **Monastics and money**, SD 4.19.

<sup>115</sup> See eg Piyasilo, *Buddhist Currents*, 1992a:6-9 (§30.22); G Schopen, “The good monk and his money in a Buddhist monasticism of ‘the Mahāyāna period’,” in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 2004:1-18 (ch 1).

<sup>116</sup> Sandra Bell, “‘Crazy wisdom,’ charisma, and the transmission of Buddhism in the United States,” *Nova Religio* 2,1 1998:55-75.

<sup>117</sup> “**Transference**” here refers to behaviour connected with emotions related to people we know (usu our parents, spouse, etc) which is directed to another (usu an authority figure, like a counsellor, religious figure, etc). In others, we qualities previously found in persons we were attached to are superimposes or “transferred” to the authority figure. This is unhealthy when it leads to exploitation, abuse and psychological dependence. Such situations are often characterized by defence mechanisms: see **Khaluṅka S** (A 8.14/4:190-195), SD 7.9. See foll n.

<sup>118</sup> See prev n first: “**Counter-transference**” is the behaviour that predominates when the authority figure returns the other party’s displacement of feelings, or the authority figure himself initiates such a transference. “Maladapt-

by denial and co-dependence.<sup>119</sup> Such relationships are psychological time-bombs waiting to explode into scandal and tragedy.<sup>120</sup>

There are two very important passages, veritably prophetic in tone, namely, that of the four “sources of loss” (*āpaya, mukha*) [§§2.3-5] and the ancient rishis [§§2.8-2.10]. The message of these passages are clear: the brahmins of the Buddha’s days do not act like their highly attained and exemplary ancestors, the rishis. What is the Living Word of the Buddha that speaks out on the reality of our day with regards to Buddhism?

The “ancient rishis” passage significantly addresses the laicized monastics of today, that they have strayed from the ancient path and should return to it [§2.3]:

### Ambaṭṭha Sutta

Here, Ambaṭṭha, a certain ascetic or brahmin, without fully realizing<sup>121</sup> this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct,

- (1) bearing his pole and khari, plunges into the depths of the forest, thinking: “I will live on available fruits as food;’
- (2) (but without realizing the above,) taking a hoe and a basket, plunges into a forest wilderness, thinking: “I will live on bulbs, roots and fruits,”
- (3) (but without realizing the above,) builds himself a fire shrine on the fringe of a village or a market town, and there dwells, attending to the fire god,
- (4) (but without realizing the above,) builds himself a four-door almshouse at a crossroads, and dwells there, thinking: “Whosoever, whether recluse or brahmin, shall come here, from any of these four quarters, I shall honour according to my ability and according to my power.’

### To the laicized monastics of today

Do you live on available almsfood, or on well-prepared regular meals throughout the day? Where is your almsbowl?

Do you eat the kind of food that the Buddha and the early saints ate, or have you changed the rules, or broken them, selective of the food you take?

Why have you borrowed outside rituals, and invented new dogmas, such as the fire puja, the meaningless transference of merit, and rituals for the dead, and false lineages?<sup>122</sup>

Why do you own huge buildings and organizations, run on huge amounts of money and manpower, so that you neglect your own practice and awakening? Why are you not *really* helping the lowly, the poor, the needy, the superstitious, the troubled and the ignorant help themselves? Why do you abuse those who believe in you?<sup>123</sup>

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ive” mean “unable to develop behaviours where needs are satisfied.” “Compulsive” refers to a psychological state that makes us act against our will or conscious desires, esp mechanically, as it were, reacting to people and situations.

<sup>119</sup> “Co-dependence” refers to *maladaptive, compulsive* behaviours learned by family or group members in order to survive in a family or group which is experiencing great emotional pain and stress.

<sup>120</sup> Sandra Bell, “Change and identity in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order,” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 17,2 1996:87-107.

<sup>121</sup> “Without fully realizing,” *anabhisambhuṇamāno* [ppr med of *na + abhi, sam + bhūṇāti* (near-syn of *pāpuṇā-ti*)] not obtaining or mastering, not being able to keep up with (D 1:101 = *asampāpuṇanto avisahamāno vā*, DA 1:268). CPD defs *an-abhisambhunana* (qv) as “the not being able to comprehend”; but see under *abhisambhavati* (2): *abhi-sambhuṇāti*. DP defs *abhisambhavati* (= *abhisambhoti, abhisambhuṇāti*) as “reaches, attains; is able, capable (of); is adequate; masters; endures, bears.” Cf *an-abhisambhuṇanto* (Nm 76 = ~ *vā ti asampāpuṇanto vā asak-konto vā*, “~ means not attaining, not being able to,” NmA). The sense is that of neither fully attaining it, nor fully comprehending it.

<sup>122</sup> See eg Franz Michael, *Rule By Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its role in society and state*, 1982.

<sup>123</sup> See eg Katy Butler, “Encountering the shadow in Buddhist America,” in J Abrams & C Zweig (eds), *Meeting the Shadow*, 1991:137-147; Madeleine Bunting, “The dark side of enlightenment,” *The Guardian* (UK) 27 Oct 1997; Yashomitra, “Yashomitra’s Shabda article March 2003,” <http://www.fwbo-files.com/yashomitra.htm>.

But it turns out that he was only capable of being an attendant (*paricāraka*)<sup>124</sup> to the one who has attained peerless knowledge and conduct.

The “ancient rishis” passage significantly and dramatically addresses the brahminized monastics of today, that they have strayed from the ancient path and should return to it:

**2.8.1** Even so, Ambaṭṭha, what about the ancient rishis of the brahmins, mantra makers, mantra preachers—that is to say, Aṣṭaka, Vāmaka, Vāma,deva, Viśvā,mitra, Jamad-agni, Aṅgi,-rasa, Bhāra,dvāja, Vāsiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, and Bhagu—whose ancient mantras and verses are chanted, uttered and collected by the brahmins of today, who sing them and recite them, and having sung them make others sing them, having recited them make others recite them?<sup>125</sup>

**2.8.2** You say, ‘I, along with my teacher, know by heart their mantras,’ but on that very account you are not yourself a rishi, nor do you know the state of a rishi, nor do you practise for the sake of rishihood!

**2.9.2** Did they (those ancient rishis) find pleasure in being well-bathed, well-perfumed, with hair and beard trimmed, decked in jewelled ear-rings and ornaments, dressed in white garments, endowed with and enjoying the five cords of sensual pleasures...?<sup>127</sup>

**2.10.1** Did they consume boiled sali rice,<sup>128</sup> free of black specks, with pure meat, curries and garnishings, with various curries, various sauces...?<sup>129</sup>

“No, master Gotama.”

Were they entertained by women, all dressed up and bent on serving them, by their side?<sup>130</sup>

“No, master Gotama.” [Fig 5.1]

“Did they go about driving chariots, drawn by mares with plaited manes and tails, whipping them with long wands and goads...?”<sup>131</sup>

“No, master Gotama.” [Fig 5.2]

### To the monastic brahmins of today

You claim to be an incarnation of a Bodhisattva or a deity, not mentioned in the Buddha’s teachings, but when were these ideas introduced and by whom really? Why don’t you tell your followers the truth? You give teachings that the Buddha never taught, and perform strange noisy rituals (and expensive ones, too). Why are the intelligent young people turning away from such a Buddhism? Why do you fight over money and power?<sup>126</sup>

You claim you and your teacher have mastered the Buddha’s teachings, but you neither keep to his Vinaya [monastic rules], nor really practise for the sake of awakening (*bodhi*) or of Bodhisattvahood.

Did the ancient sanghins of the Buddha’s time leave their hair uncut, keep a beard, wear ornaments, in exquisite robes, or enjoy various sense-pleasures, or own property, or handle money, or play politics? Why shouldn’t laypeople know the Vinaya?

Did they enjoy specially prepared boiled high-grade rice, well-cleaned, with various dishes, all prepared in time, and where is your almsbowl?

Were they waited on or entertained by loyal servants whom they abused on a whim?

Did they go about in expensive cars, often chauffeured and pampered, and with young companions?

<sup>124</sup> This verb form usually means the serving of food, but has sexual connotations as well (Olivelle 1999:58 & n29): cf the vb *paricārenti* at §2.10a n.

<sup>125</sup> See (§2.8a) n ad loc below.

<sup>126</sup> See eg Donald S Lopez, Jr, *Prisoners of Shangri-la*, 1998.

<sup>127</sup> See (§2.9b) n ad loc below.

<sup>128</sup> See (§2.10a) n ad loc below.

<sup>129</sup> See (§2.10a) n ad loc below.

<sup>130</sup> See Fig 5 here; see also (§2.10a) n ad loc below.

<sup>131</sup> Bodewitz captures the sense in which the chariots are regarded as decadent by characterizing them as the “motor cars” of the brahminical elite (1974:90 n17), quoted by Black 2007b:18. See (§2.10a) n ad loc below.

“Did they have themselves guarded by men with long swords, safe behind walled cities, with moats around them, and with cross-bars (across their gates)...?”<sup>132</sup>

“No, master Gotama.”

**2.10.2** “So, you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, are neither rishi, nor do you live, practising, for the sake of rishihood.”

Did they live in secure and walled mansions, with comfortable rooms, complete with various modern accessories and means of entertainment?

In that case, you are neither true renunciants nor do you live practising for the sake of awakening or bodhisattvahood.

In short, who is a laicized monastic brahmin? He is a very busy monastic *with so many things* and *with so many things to do*—so much having and doing—that it is hard for you to meet him, especially if you have a question on Dharma, or need instructions on meditation, or a care that needs counselling. In fact, it would be impossible to meet him if you do not have the means or status to do so. These teachings of **the Metta Sutta** (Khṇ 9 = Sn 1.8) clearly admonish all Buddhists, especially those who are to be our spiritual exemplars:

*sakko ujū ca sījū ca  
suvaco v’assa mudu anamāni.*

*santussakso ca subhāro ca  
appa,kicco ca sallahujā,vutti  
santindriyo ca nipako ca  
appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho.*

*na ca khuddam samācare kiñci  
yena viññū pare upavadayyūm*

He should be able, upright, and thoroughly upright, easy to speak to, gentle and humble,

contented and easily supportable, having little busyness and living a simple life, with his senses calmed, and wise (in mind-watching), unobtrusive, not greedily attached to families.

And let one not do even a small wrong, for which others who are wise might censure.

Khṇ 9 = Sn 1.8 (SD 38.3)



**Fig 5a.** Rich, well-dressed couple. The woman [§2.10.1] wears a very elaborate headdress and necklace, a skirt from the waist to the ankles, and a very broad girdle over her hips over the skirt. Detail from bas-relief on Bharhut Stupa, India (200 BCE).



**Fig 5b.** Vessantara in his chariot, the kind of chariot used by Ambaṭṭha. Notice the plumes on the horses’ heads, and their elaborately plaited manes and tails. (Bharhut Stupa panel, India, 200 BCE). [§2.10a]

<sup>132</sup> See (§2.10a) n ad loc below.



## The Ambaṭṭha Discourse

### D 3

[87] 1.1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed was walking on a Dharma tour in Kosala country<sup>133</sup> with a large company of monks numbering some five hundred. And he arrived at the brahmin village called Icchā,naṅgala.<sup>134</sup> There the Blessed One stayed in the Icchā,naṅgala jungle<sup>135</sup> outside Icchā,naṅgala.

### Pokkhāra,sāti

1.1.2 Now at that time, the brahmin Pokkhāra,sāti<sup>136</sup> was living [governing]<sup>137</sup> in Ukkatṭhā,<sup>138</sup> teeming with life,<sup>139</sup> with grass, wood and water, with rice, a royal domain presented (to him) by Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, as a royal gift, a brahmadeya [a fief].<sup>140</sup>

1.2 Now the brahmin Pokkhāra,sāti heard thus:

“It is said that the recluse Gotama,<sup>141</sup> the Sakya son, who went forth from a Sakya family, is wandering (on a Dharma-tour) in Kosala country with a large number of monks numbering some five hundred, has arrived at Icchā,naṅgala, staying in the Icchā,naṅgala jungle outside Icchā,naṅgala.”

1.2.2 Now a good report about that Master Gotama has been going around thus:<sup>142</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Kosala is one of the 16 “great countries” (*mahā,janapada*) of ancient India of the Buddha’s time: see SD 9 (16a) & also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahajanapadas>.

<sup>134</sup> **Icchānaṅgala** is a brahmin village in Kosala, prob near to Pokkhāra,sāti’s fief of Ukkatṭhā, and a residence for brahmins of “great halls.” **Sutta Nipāta** (calling it Icchā,naṅkala) mentions prominent brahmins such as Caṅkī, Tārukka, Pokkhāra,sāti, Jānussoṇi and Todeyya, as living there (Sn p115). The famous learned brahmin youths Vāsetṭha and Bhāra,dvāja brahmin youths live there, too (**Vāsetṭha S**, Sn p115 f = M 2:196). Buddhaghosa says that learned brahmins of Kosala meet every 6 months under Pokkhāra,sāti at Ukkatṭhā for bloodline cleansing (*jāti,-sodhanattham*), or at Icchānaṅgala for Veda recital and interpretation (MA 3:431). **The Icchā,naṅgala S** (S 54.11) records the Buddha’s 3-month rains retreat there in near-solitude, visited only by a monk attendant who brings him almsfood (S 54.11/5:325-327). However, apparently, his stay is not so peaceful, as excited Icchā,naṅgala residents would visit him in noisy droves, so that he has to send Nāgita (his attendant then) to quieten them down (A 5.30/-3:30-32; cf A 6.42/3:341, 6.86/4:340-344). See **Lohicca S** (D 12) @ SD 34.8(1.3).

<sup>135</sup> “Jungle,” *vana,saṅḍa*, or “dense woods, jungle thicket.” See SD 34.8 (1.3).

<sup>136</sup> Be Ce Se *Pokkhāra,sāti*; Ee *Pokkhāra,sāti*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ajjhāvasati* has the senses of living (as in leading a household life) and living as a lord (over a fief, etc).

<sup>138</sup> See Intro (1.2), sv Ukkatṭhā.

<sup>139</sup> *Satt’ussadam* = *satta* + *ussada*, lit “abundance of beings,” ie densely populated with humans and animals.

Comy however refers only to humans: “*satt’ussada* means crowded with beings, teeming with the masses, an abundance of humans” (*satt’ussadan ti sattehi ussadam, ussannaṃ bahu,janam ākiṇṇa,manussam*, DA 245,20).

<sup>140</sup> *Ukkatṭham ajjhāvasati satt’ussadam sa,tiṇa,kaṭṭh’odakam sa,dhañṇam rāja,bhoggam rañṇā Pasenadinā Kosalena dinnam rājādāyam brahma,deyyam*. This is stock with differing locations and donors: **Ambaṭṭha S** (*Ukkatṭham...rañṇā Pasenadi,kosalena*, D 3,1.1/1:87), **Soṇa,danḍa S** (*Campaṃ...rañṇā Māgadhenā Seniyena Bimbisārena*, D 1,1/1:111, 1.4/114), **Kūṭa,danta S** (*Khāṇu,mataṃ...rañṇā Māgadhenā Seniyena Bimbisārena*, D 5,1/1:127, 131), **Lohicca S** (*Sāla,vatikam... rañṇā Pasenadi,kosalena*, D 7,1/1:224), **Pāyāsi S** (*Setavyāyam... rañṇā Pasenadi,kosalena*, D 23,1/2:316); **Caṅkī S** (*Opasadam... rañṇā Pasenadinā Kosalena*, M 95.1/2:164, 95.8/166); cf **Amba,sakkhara Pv**: *satt’ussadam nirayam*, “a hell crowded with beings” (Pv 4.1.8/46). **Brahma,deyya**, (Skt *brahma,deya*) “a supreme gift,” ie land granted to brahmins by the kings of Kosala (**Ambaṭṭha S** = D 3,1.1.2/1:87 @ SD 21.3) or of Magadha (**Kūṭa,danta S** = D 5,1.2/1:127 @ SD 22.8) for perpetuity. Unlike donated monastic lands, which are the corporate property of the “sangha of the four directions,” the brahmadeya is the brahmin’s personal property or fief, which he uses for agriculture. In the case of Kūṭa,danta, for example, we see him using such income to perform a large sacrifice (D 5/1:127-149 @ SD 22.8). See D:RD 1:108 n1 & Uma Chakravarti 1987:57.

<sup>141</sup> This is a stock passage to show that the brahmin householders are well acquainted with the Buddha’s background. This paragraph denotes the Buddha’s social status (in the minds of the brahmins and the world), which adds a significant sense of charisma to his personality.

<sup>142</sup> For details on the recollection of the Buddha’s virtues, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7.

“So too, is he the Blessed One:<sup>143</sup> for, he is arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter. [88]

He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.  
It is good to see arhats such as these.”<sup>144</sup>

### Pokkhara,sāti sends Ambaṭṭha to see the Buddha

**1.3** Now at that time, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti had a brahmin youth (*māṇava*), Ambaṭṭha, as his resident student, a mantra-reciter,<sup>145</sup> a mantra-expert, a master of the Three Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the Iti,hāsa Purāṇas<sup>146</sup> as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas,<sup>147</sup> grammarian,<sup>148</sup> and well versed in the Lokāyata [nature-lore]<sup>149</sup> and the marks of the great man<sup>150</sup>—so that he is accepted and acknowledged by the words of his own noble [aryan] masters of the Three Vedas, thus: “What I know, you know that, too; what you know, I know that, too.”<sup>151</sup>

**1.4** Then the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti addressed the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha,

<sup>143</sup> Alt tr: “For the following reasons, too, he is the Blessed One [the Lord]...” On the meaning of *iti pi so*, see *Buddhānussati*, SD 15.7 (2.2) & n.

<sup>144</sup> *Sādhu kho pana tathā,rūpānaṃ arahataṃ dassanaṃ hotī ti. Arahataṃ* is 3 gen pl. For details on this statement, see *Kesa,puttiya S* (A 3.65/1:188-193), SD 35.4a (comy n 1d).

<sup>145</sup> “A mantra-reciter...the marks of the great man”: *ajjhāyako manta,dharo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragu sa,nighaṇdu,ketubhānaṃ sakkhara-p,pabhedānaṃ iti,hāsa,pañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyata,mahā.purisa.lakkhaṇesu anavayo*. This is stock: *Ambaṭṭha S* (D 3.1.3/1:88), *Soṇa,danḍa S* (D 4.5(3)/1:114), *Kūṭa,danta S* (D 5.6(3)/1:130); *Ti,kappa S* (A 3.58.1/1:163), *(Tevijja) Jāṇussoṇī S* (A 3.59.1/1:166), *Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S* (A 5.192.2.4+6/-3:223 f). Cf Tha 1171 (“expert in the Three Vedas,” *tiṇṇaṃ vedāna pāragu*); also Miln 10, Divy 619.20, 620.19. The Majjhima “brahmin pericope” omits “a mantra-reciter, a mantra-expert” (*ajjhāyako manta,dharo*): *Brahm’āyu S* (M 91.2/2:133), an aged brahmin; *Sela S* (M 92 = Sn 3.7/p105); *Assalāyana S* (M 93.3/2:147), a 16-year-old brahmin youth (qqv). Cf Tha 1171 (“expert in the Three Vedas,” *tiṇṇaṃ vedāna pāragu*); also Miln 10, Divy 619.-20, 620.19. Here *mantra* refers to specifics vedic hymns or sacrificial formulae. *Ajjhāyaka* (Skt *ādhyāyika*, *adhyāyin*) is a vedic student or scholar, one skilled in reciting the Vedas, a brahminical teacher. *Aggañña S* (D 27) plays a humorous pun on its etym: *na...jhāyanti*, “they do not meditate,” hence they are called *ajjhāyaka*, ie non-meditators: see D 27,23/3:94 @ SD 2.19.

<sup>146</sup> Iti,hāsa Purāṇas are the oral tradition of brahminical legends of kings and sages.

<sup>147</sup> *Padako veyyākaraṇo*, ie, well versed in the *pada,pāṭha* of Sanskrit grammar. Technically, this refers to the *pada* (or literal, word for word) method of reciting (or writing) Veda sentences, ie, “a method of arranging each word of a Vedic text separately in its original form [cf *pada*] without regard to the rules of [sandhi]; cf *krama-* and *samhitā-pāṭha*.” (SED). By itself, *pada* can here be translated as “word or word structure.”

<sup>148</sup> On *veyyākaraṇa*, see BHSD: sv *vyākaraṇa*, = *vaiyākaraṇa* (p517).

<sup>149</sup> *Lokāyata*. This seems to be the early meaning of the term. Its reference to the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka is apparently later: see Rhys Davids, D:RD 1:166-172. See *Lokāyatikā Brāhmaṇā S* (A 9.38/4:428-432), 35.15. See also Jayatilleke 1963:48-58 (§§55-67).

<sup>150</sup> See Intro (2.2.1).

<sup>151</sup> *Yam ahaṃ jānāmi taṃ tvaṃ jānāsi, yaṃ tvaṃ jānāsi taṃ ahaṃ jānāmi ti*. Cf Āḷāra Kālāma’s words to the Bodhisattva on completion of the latter’s training: “Thus, the Dharma that I know, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, I too know that same Dharma” (*iti yāhaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi, yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi taṃ ahaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi*, M 26,15.3/1:165 @ SD 1.11) & Uddaka Rāma,putta’s words on a similar occasion: “Thus, the Dharma that Rāma knew, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, Rāma too knew that same Dharma” (*iti yaṃ dhammaṃ Rāmo abhiññāsi taṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, taṃ dhammaṃ Rāmo abhiññāsi*, M 26,16.3/1:166 @ SD 1.11).

“It is said, dear<sup>152</sup> Ambaṭṭha, that the recluse Gotama, the Sakya son, who went forth from a Sakya family, is wandering (on a Dharma-tour) in Kosala country with a large number of monks numbering some five hundred, has arrived at Icchā,naṅgala, staying in the Icchā,naṅgala jungle outside Icchā,naṅgala.”

1.4.2 Now, a good report about that Master Gotama has been going around thus:

‘So too, is he the Blessed One:<sup>153</sup> for, he is arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter.

He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

It is good to see arhats such as these.’

1.4.3 Now, dear Ambaṭṭha, you go to the ascetic Gotama. Having gone to the ascetic Gotama, find out whether the word going around about the master Gotama is true or not, whether the master Gotama is such or not. Thus will I know the truth about the master Gotama.”

### The 32 marks of the great man

1.5 “But how, sir,<sup>154</sup> will I know whether the word going around about the master Gotama is true or not, whether the master Gotama is such or not?”

1.5.2 “Dear Ambaṭṭha, in the mantras that have been handed down to us, there are the 32 marks of the great man.

Such a great man thus endowed have only two destinies, no other. If they live a household life, they will become a wheel-turning king, a Dharma-rajah [a just king], a victor over the four quarters, a country blessed with stability, and a possessor of the seven jewels. [89] These are seven jewels, that is to say: the wheel jewel, the elephant jewel, the horse jewel, the gem jewel, the woman jewel, the householder jewel, and the advisor jewel as the seventh.<sup>155</sup>

And he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushing the armies of others.

And he dwells over this earth bound by the ocean, holding it in his sway with neither rod nor sword.<sup>156</sup>

If he were to go forth from the house into the houseless state, he will become the fully self-awakened Buddha, who removes the veil over the world.

Dear Ambaṭṭha, I am a giver of mantras; you are a receiver of mantras.”

<sup>152</sup> *Tata*.

<sup>153</sup> Alt tr: “For the following reasons, too, he is the Blessed One [the Lord]...” On the meaning of *iti pi so*, see *Buddhānussati*, SD 15.7 (2.2) & n.

<sup>154</sup> *Bho*. In Buddhist literature, this is regarded as a neutral, albeit slightly condescending, mode of address, usu used by brahmins with equals to others as a polite vocative. In brahminical literature, however, *bhoḥ* (tr as “hey, you!”) is a disrespectful mode of address, often used in anger. The polite form would be the obsequious *ārya*. The Mahābharata, describing the social upheavels in the Kāli,yuga (end of times), say: *bho,vāḍinas tathā śūdrā brāhma-nāś cārya,vāḍinaḥ*, tr by JAB van Buitenen as “The serfs [= Śūdras] will say ‘Hey you!,’ the brahmins will say ‘Pray, sir!’” (3.186.33). See Olivelle 1999:58 f.

<sup>155</sup> *Āgatāni kho tāta Ambaṭṭha amhākaṃ mantesu dvattiṃsa,mahā.purisa,lakkhaṇāni yehi samannāgatassa mahā,-purisassa dve’va gatiyo bhavanti anaññā: sace agāraṃ ajjhāvasati rājā hoti cakka,vatti dhammiko dhamma,rājā cātur-anto vijitāvī janapada-t,thāvāriya-p,patto satta,ratana,samannāgato. Tass’imāni satta,ratanāni bhavanti. Sey-yathīdaṃ cakka,ratanam hatthi,ratanam assa,ratanam maṇi,ratanam itthi,ratanam gaha,pati,ratanam parināyaka,-ratanam eva sattamam. See Ambaṭṭha S (D 3.1.5/1:88 f) = Mahāpadāna S (D 14.1.31/2:16 f) = Lakkhaṇa S (D 30.1.1.2/3:142) = Sela S (Sn p106; cf SnA 450 = DA 1:250); for details, see Mahā Sudassana S (D 17.1.7-17/2:-172-177), SD 36.12; cf Miln 37 f; Divy 467.012-016.*

<sup>156</sup> *So imam pathaviṃ sāgara,pariyantam adaṇḍena asatthena dhammena abhivijiya ajjhāvasati.*

## Ambaṭṭha goes to see the Buddha

**1.6** “Yes, sir,” the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha replied the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti. Rising from his seat, he saluted the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, circumambulated him and then mounted a chariot drawn by mares; and together with some brahmin youths, departed for dense forest outside Icchā,naṅgala. When he has gone as far as his chariot could go, he descended from the vehicle and, proceeding on foot, entered the park.

**1.7** Now at that time, some monks were walking up and down<sup>157</sup> in the open air.

Then the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha approached the monks, and having approached, said this to the monks:

“Sirs, where is master Gotama dwelling now? We have come here to see master Gotama.”

**1.8** Then the monks thought:

“This brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha is from a distinguished family and is a resident pupil of the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti. But the Blessed One will have no difficulty holding a conversation with such a son of family.

They said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“Ambaṭṭha, there is that dwelling place [vihara]<sup>158</sup> with its doors shut. Go up to it with little sound, enter the porch softly, then give a cough and knock on the crossbar. The Blessed One will open the door for you.”

**1.9** Then the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, approached the dwelling place [vihara] whose doors were shut. Having approached it with little sound, he entered the porch softly, then gave a cough and knocked on the crossbar.<sup>159</sup> The Blessed One opened the door.

The brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha entered. The brahmin youths, too, entered,<sup>160</sup> and then exchanged friendly words and cordial greetings<sup>161</sup> with the Blessed One. When the friendly greetings were concluded, the brahmin youths sat down at one side.

**1.9.2** But the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, walking up and down, exchanged various cordial greetings with the Blessed One [90] who was seated down, or, while standing, exchanged various cordial greetings with the Blessed One who was seated down.<sup>162</sup>

**1.10** Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“Ambaṭṭha, is that how you would hold a conversation with old and aged teachers and teachers of your teachers, that is to say, walking and standing, exchanged various cordial greetings?”

## Ambaṭṭha’s first talk on the “menials”

**1.10.2** “Certainly not, master Gotama! It is proper, master Gotama, *only for a brahmin* to converse while walking *with another brahmin* who is walking, too; or, it is proper, master Gotama, *only for a brahmin* to converse while standing *with another brahmin* who is standing, too; or, it is proper, master Gotama, *only for a brahmin* to converse while sitting *with another brahmin* who is sitting, too.

<sup>157</sup> *Caṅkamanti*, ie either exercising themselves or doing walking meditation.

<sup>158</sup> *Vihāro*, here referring to a simple monastic cell, not the elaborate building of later times.

<sup>159</sup> On the Buddha doing this, see V 1:248; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,4/1:161), **Dhamma,cetiya S** (M 89,8/-2:120), **Nandaka S** (A 9.4/4:359), **Kosala S 2** (A 10.30/5:65).

<sup>160</sup> Either the Buddha’s dwelling place (vihara) was spacious enough to all the brahmins youths, or only some of them entered his quarters.

<sup>161</sup> *Sammodimsu sammodanīyaṃ kathāṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā*, lit “they greeted (the Blessed One); having exchanged complimentary talk that gladdens...” The phrase *sammodimsu sammodanīyaṃ kathāṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāreti* is stock: D 1:52, 90, 118, 152; M 1:16 (*anussariyamāna,sukhato sārāṇīyaṃ*, “gladdening,” on account of recollecting happiness,” MA 1:110); A 1:55, 281, 2:42; Sn 419; (cf BHS *saṃmukhaṃ saṃmodanīm saṃraṅjanīm vividhāṃ kathāṃ vyatisārya*, Divy 43.8, 47.19, 96.26, 318.16; *saṃmodanīm saṃraṅjanīm vividhāṃ kathāṃ vyatisāryaikānte ’sthāt*, Avdś 1.229, 2:140); *sārāṇīyaṃ kathāṃ katheti*, DhA 1:107.4:87; (cf BHS *saṃraṅjanīyaṃ dharmaṃ samādāya*, Divy 260.7).

<sup>162</sup> *Ambaṭṭho pana māṇavo caṅkamanto ’pi nisinnena bhagavatā kañci kañci kathāṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāreti. Ṭhito ’pi nisinnena bhagavatā kañci kañci kathāṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāreti*. See Intro (3.2).

But, master Gotama, as for shavelings, little ascetics, menials, blacks, born of the feet of our Kinsman (Mahā Brahmā), I would converse with them just as I now do with master Gotama!”<sup>163</sup>

**1.11** “Now, Ambaṭṭha, you must have a purpose in coming here. If you have come with a purpose, Ambaṭṭha, you should direct your mind well to that purpose. This master Ambaṭṭha, accomplished in conceit, surely is lacking [unfinished] in his training. For, what else could it be but for the lack of training?”<sup>164</sup>

**1.12** Then, the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, being angered and displeased at being called one lacking in training by the Blessed One, becoming spiteful, contemptuous, and insulting<sup>165</sup> the Blessed One, thus:

“Fierce, master Gotama, is the Sakya breed! Harsh, master Gotama, is the Sakya breed! Touchy, [91] master Gotama, is the Sakya breed! Violent, master Gotama, is the Sakya breed! Menial, master Gotama, is the Sakya breed! That the ascetics do not honour brahmins, that they do not respect brahmins, that they do not esteem brahmins, that they do not revere brahmins, that they do not worship brahmins!

This, master Gotama, is not fitting! This is improper! That these Sakyas, being menials, that these ascetics, being menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not esteem brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not worship brahmins!”

Thus, the brahmin youth, for the first time, charged the Sakyas with talk of being menials.

### Ambaṭṭha’s second talk on the “menials”

**1.13** “How now, Ambaṭṭha, have the Sakyas offended you?”

“Once, master Gotama, on a certain business of my teacher, the brahmin Pokkhara, sāti, I went to Kapila, vatthu.

I approached the assembly-hall of the Sakyas. Now at that time, some Sakyas, both old and young, seated on high seats, were jestfully and playfully finger-poking one another. They were obviously ridiculing me, I’m sure! No one offered me a seat!

That, master Gotama, is not fitting! That is improper! That these Sakyas, being menials, that these ascetics, being menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not esteem brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not worship brahmins!”

Thus, the brahmin youth, for the second time, charged the Sakyas with talk of being menials.

### Ambaṭṭha’s third talk on the “menials”: the quails

**1.14** “Ambaṭṭha, even quails, little birds as they are, chatter as they wish in their nest. What more of the Sakyas, Ambaṭṭha, in their own Kapilavatthu! It is not worthy of the venerable Ambaṭṭha to take offence of such a minor thing.”

<sup>163</sup> *Ye ca kho te, bho Gotama, mundakā samanakā ibbhā kanhā bandhu.pādāpaccā, tehi’pi me saddhim evaṃ kathā,sallāpo hoti, yatha-r-iva bhotā Gotamenā ti.* The underscored words are stock—meaning, “shavelings, little [false] ascetics, menials, blacks, born of the feet of the Kinsman (Mahā Brahmā)” —are contemptuous epithets brahmins often use for non-brahmins, esp monks, shudras and outcastes: D 1:90, 103, 3:90; M 1:334; S 4:117. Although Comys generally equate *bandhu* (Kinsman) with Mahā Brahmā (eg DA 1:254), for the brahmins the term actually refers to Puruṣa, the cosmic man, as mentioned in **Puruṣa Sūkta**, hymn 10.90 of the R̥gveda. *Ibbha* is a general contemptuous term for non-brahmins, as the ancient imperial Chinese regarded non-Chinese as “devils,” the Jews regarded others as “gentiles” (Hebrew *goyim*, sg *goy*), or the fundamental Christians regarded non-believers as “heathens.”

<sup>164</sup> *Atthikavato kho pana te, Ambaṭṭha, idh’āgamanam ahoṣi, yāy’eva kho pan’atthāya āgaccheyyātha* [Ce Ee āgaccheyyātho], *tam eva attham sādhuṃ manasi kareyyātha* [Ce Ee manasikareyyātho]. *Avusitavā yeva kho pana bho ayam Ambaṭṭho māṇavo vusita,mānī kim aññatra avusitattā ti.* Notice the Buddha’s directness, which reflects his serious view on proper spiritual training. Cf ChU 5.3.4, where rajah Jaivali charges Śveta, ketu that he is “not *anuśiṣṭhaḥ*” (ie uneducated) and Śveta, ketu feels *āyasta* (hurt, crestfallen, and angered).

<sup>165</sup> *Upavadamāno.* This passage recurs in **Vekhanassa S** (M 80), where the angry speaker is the wanderer Vekhanassa, and the reading there is *vadamāno*, “saying” (M 80.14.2/2:43), SD 40a.15 & (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99) where the angry speaker is the brahmin youth Subha the reading is also *vadamāno* (M 99.10/2:200), SD 38.6.

**1.15** “There are these four classes, master Gotama: the brahmins, the kshatriya, the vaishyas, and the shudras. Of these four classes, master [92] Gotama, three happen to be merely servants of the brahmins.

Master Gotama, it is not fitting! It is improper! That these Sakyas, being menials, that these ascetics, being menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not esteem brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not worship brahmins!”

Thus, the brahmin youth, for the third time, charged the Sakyas with talk of being menials.

### The slave’s son

**1.16** Then it occurred to the Blessed One:

“This brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha is very set on putting down the Sakyas with talk of menials. What now if I were to question him regarding his clan [gens]?”

Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“Ambaṭṭha, what is your clan?”

“I am of the Kaṇhâyana [Kṛṣṇâyana] clan, master Gotama.”

“Now, Ambaṭṭha, following your ancient name and clan, on your mother’s and father’s sides, there are Sakya noble sons [sons of the masters]; but *you* are a Sakya’s slave-girl’s son [descendent].<sup>166</sup> But the Sakyas, Ambaṭṭha, regard the rajah Okkāka as their ancestor.

1.16.2 THE SAKYA LINEAGE. Once upon a time, Ambaṭṭha, **the rajah Okkāka**<sup>167</sup> had a beloved and dear queen.<sup>168</sup> Out of the desire to transfer the royal succession to her son, he banished his elder children—Okkā,mukha [Ukkā,mukha], Karakaṇḍu [Karakāṇḍa], Hatthinika [Hatthinīya], and Sini,sura [Sini,-pura]—from the country. Being thus banished, they took up dwelling in a great forest of teak trees on the shore of a lake on the Himalayan foothills.

Out of the fear of breaching their bloodline (*jāti*), they cohabited with their own sisters.<sup>169</sup>

Then, Ambaṭṭha, the rajah Okkāka addressed his palace ministers:

“Where, sirs, do the princes dwell<sup>170</sup> now?”

<sup>166</sup> *Porāṇam kho pana te ambaṭṭha mātā,pettikaṃ nāma,gottam anussarato, ayya,puttā sakyā bhavanti, dāsi,putto tvam asi sakyānam.* CPD defines *ayya,putta* (Skt *ārya,putra*) as follow: (1) a young master, “the son of the house”; (2) a husband; (3) a venerable person; a prince. Here, its opp seems to be *dāsi,putta*: D 3,1.22/1:95,30. In “but you are a Sakya’s slave-woman’s son,” “son” has a generic sense, meaning “descendent,” as at **Sambula J** (J 519/5:94), where *ayya,putta* = *ayya* (“gentleman, lord”); PvA 66. As a suffix, *-putta* should be tr contextually, as in *gaha,pati,-putta*, which can be “household’s son” (when paired with *gaha,pati*: **Sāmañña,phala S**, D 2.41/1:62; **Kandaraka S**, M 51.13/1:344; **Yamaka S**, S 22.85/3:112); or “young householder” (**Sigāl’ovāda S**, D 31.1/3:180); **Soṇa S 1**, S 22.40/3:48); cf *deva,putta*, “young deva” (D 2:12, 14; S 1:46 f, 216 f, 4:289; A 1:278; It 76); or simply as “a member of a *gaha,pati* clan” or pleonastically, as “householder” (**Kevaḍḍha S**, D 11.1/1:211; *bhaṇḍāgārīko* ~o, “a treasurer who is a householder,” Comy on **Tiro,kuḍḍa S**, PvA 20 f). This usage is esp common in late literature, eg *ludda,putta* (“hunter’s son = hunter,” **Kuruṅga Miga J**, J 206/2:154). See **Gihī S** (A 5.179), SD 70.10 (2).

<sup>167</sup> This is the 3rd Okkāka, who, Comys say, had 5 queens (*mahesī*): Hatthā (or Bhattā), Cittā, Jantu, Jālinī and Visākhā, each with a retinue of 500 women. The eldest queen, **Hatthā**, had 4 sons (Okkā,mukha, Karakaṇḍu, Hatthinika, and Sini,sura) and 5 daughters (Piyā, Suppiyā, Ānandā, Vijitā, and Vijita,senā): they are those referred to here. Hatthā passed away after giving birth to the last (DA 1:258; SnA 352). See Nakamura 2000: 32-35. DPPN: sv Hatthā, errs here.

<sup>168</sup> We only know the junior prince’s name, ie, Jantu (DA 1:258 f; SnA 1:352 f), which means that her mother is prob Jantū. The Mahāvastu names him Jentā and his mother, Jentī (Mvst 1:348).

<sup>169</sup> *Te jāti,sambheda,bhayā sakahī bhaginīhi saddhiṃ saivāsam kappesum.* Scholar generally agree that incestuous marriages were widespread at least during the Graeco-Roman period of Egyptian history. Numerous papyri and the Roman census declarations attest to many husbands and wives being brother and sister (Naphtali Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, Oxford, 1983; Roger S Bagnall & Bruce W Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt*, Cambridge, 1994; Brent D Shaw, “Explaining Incest: Brother-Sister Marriage in Graeco-Roman Egypt,” *Man*, ns 27,2 Jun 1992: 267-299). Keith Hopkins has conclusively demonstrated this, too (“Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 1980: 303-354). Some of these incestuous relationships were in the royal family, esp the Ptolemies (Cleopatra VII married more than one of her brothers). One important reason for incestuous marriage, as such, is *political*, ie the consolidation of power.

‘Your majesty, there is a great teak (*saka*) forest on the shore of a lake on the Himalayan foothills<sup>171</sup>—the princes are there now. Out of the fear of breaching their bloodline, they have cohabited with their own (*sakāhi*) sisters.’<sup>172</sup>

Then the rajah Okkāka made this inspired utterance (*udāna*): [93]

‘*Sakya* (teak) indeed, sirs, are the princes! Perfectly *sakya* (their own), sirs, are the princes!’<sup>173</sup>

1.16.3 AMBAṬṬHA’S DESCENT. Now, Ambaṭṭha, there was a slave girl of Okkāka, named Disā. She gave birth to a child name Kaṇha [Black].<sup>174</sup> As soon as Kaṇha was born, he uttered,

‘Wash me, mother! Bathe me, mother! Free me from this impurity! So that I shall be of use to you.’<sup>175</sup>

Ambaṭṭha, just as today, people perceiving goblins [demons] recognize them as ‘Goblins (*pisāca*)!’ even so, then, Ambaṭṭha, people perceiving goblins, recognize them as ‘the dark ones (*kaṇhā*)!’

They spoke thus:

‘It speaks as soon as it is born! A dark one is born! A goblin is born!’<sup>176</sup>

Thenceforth, Ambaṭṭha, the Kaṇhāyanā [Kṛṣṇāyanā]<sup>177</sup> came into being, and he is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas.

So it was then, Ambaṭṭha, following your ancient name and clan, on your mother’s and father’s sides, there are Sakya noble sons. But *you* are a Sakya’s slave-girl’s son [descendent].” [§1.16.1]

### The Buddha consults the brahmin youths

1.17 When this was spoken, the brahmin youths said this to the Blessed One:

“Let not master Gotama humiliate Ambaṭṭha Māṇava so harshly with talk of a slave girl’s son.

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava, master Gotama, is well born, and

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is a householder’s son, and

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is deeply learned, and

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is one with a fine voice [an instrument of the Good Word],<sup>178</sup> and

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is wise, and

<sup>170</sup> *Sammanti*, 3 sg pres *sammati* (*śam*; Dhātp 436 = *upasama*): D 1:92; S 1:226; J 5: 396; DA 1:262 (= *vasati*).

<sup>171</sup> This is prob Kapila, vatthu (Skt Kapila, vastu): see Nakamura 2000:47-54.

<sup>172</sup> Sibling marriage is often found in ancient royal families, esp the Ptolemies of Egypt (305-30 BCE); The famous Cleopatra VII was married to her younger brother, Ptolemy XIII. Her mother and father, Cleopatra V and Ptolemy XII, had also been brother and sister. Such consanguinous marriages probably incurred upon them a multi-organ fibrotic condition such as Erdheim–Chester disease or a familial multifocal fibrosclerosis where thyroiditis, obesity and ocular proptosis may have all occurred concurrently (H Ashrafian, “Familial proptosis and obesity in the Ptolemies,” *J. Journal of the Royal Soc of Medicine* 98,2 2005:85-86). Sibling or consanguinous marriages in ancient India were resorted to to preserve the clan’s purity and also contain power within it. Such marriage, however, were uncommon.

<sup>173</sup> *Sakyā vata bho kumārā, parama, sakyā vata bho kumārā ’ti*. *Bho* here pl (rare: A 4.187/2:180,27+181,7; Sn 457a); usu 2<sup>nd</sup> pl is *bhonto*.

<sup>174</sup> According to Māṇava Dharma, śāstra (10.8+47), the Ambaṭṭha clan arose from the union of a brahmin father and a vaishya mother (also SED: Ambaṣṭa). See Intro (1.3).

<sup>175</sup> Cf **Acchariya-abbhūta S** (M 123), where the Bodhisattva speaks his first words at birth (M 123.20/3:123,21), SD 52.2. See Analayo 2010:39.

<sup>176</sup> *Ayam sañjāto paccābhāsi, kaṇho jāto pisāca jāto*: Be Ce Se read *ayam jāto pabyāhāsi*. Cf Printz 1925:127. One of the parallels to this passage, DĀ 20/T1.83a10, reports that people tend to be terrified by an infant’s ability to speak. Cf **Suppavāsā S** (U 2.8), where Suppavāsā’s 7-day-old child speaks with Moggallāna, winning the Buddha’s praise (U 2.8/17,27).

<sup>177</sup> This is the patronymic from *Kaṇha*.

<sup>178</sup> *Kalyāṇa, vāk, karaṇo*. The “Good Word” (*kalyāṇa, vāk*) here refers to the Three Vedas and brahminical mantras. This is however is conjectural, but this sense is probable if the text is a late one. Interestingly, Ambaṭṭha does not claim that “handsome, good-looking, pleasing, endowed with the most excellent colour, of perfect complexion, of perfect physique, of no mean appearance, one worthy of being looked at,” as in the case of Kūṭa, danta: see **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5.6(4)/1:131), SD 22.8.

Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is capable of debating with the master Gotama.”<sup>179</sup>

**1.18** Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youths:

“Now if you brahmin youths think that Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is low born, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is not a householder’s son, Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is of little [94] learning, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is not one with a fine voice [not an instrument of the Good Word], and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is unwise, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is incapable of debating with the master Gotama, then let Ambaṭṭha Māṇava be silent, and *you* discuss this matter with me.”<sup>180</sup>

But if you brahmin youths think that Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is well born, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is a householder’s son, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is deeply learned, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is one with a fine voice [the instrument of the Good Word], and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is wise, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is capable of debating with the master Gotama, then let you (the brahmin youths) be silent, and let *Ambaṭṭha Māṇava* debate with me.”<sup>181</sup>

**1.19** “Ambaṭṭha, master Gotama, is well born, Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is a householder’s son, and the Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is deeply learned, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is one with a fine voice [the instrument of the Good Word], and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is wise, and Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is capable of debating with the master Gotama.

We will be silent! Let Ambaṭṭha Māṇava debate with master Gotama!”

### The Buddha questions Ambaṭṭha

**1.20** Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“A reasonable question,<sup>182</sup> Ambaṭṭha, has arisen: in spite of your wishes, it should be answered.<sup>183</sup> If you do not answer, or were to digress in any way, or were to remain silent, or were to depart from here, your head would surely right here shatter into seven pieces!”<sup>184</sup>

What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard, when the brahmins, old and aged, the teachers of teachers, were talking together regarding where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from and who the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas was?”

When this was said, the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha remained silent.

For the second time, the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard, when the brahmins, old and aged, the teachers of teachers, were talking together regarding where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from and who the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas [95] was?”

For the second time, the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha remained silent.

Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

<sup>179</sup> *Sujāto ca bho Gotama Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, kulaputto ca Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, bahussuto ca Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, kalyāṇa, vāk, karaṇo ca Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, paṇḍito ca Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, pahoti ca Ambaṭṭho māṇavo, bhōtā Gotamena saddhim asmim vacane paṭimantetun ti.* This is stock: D 3.1.17/1:93 (the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, of himself), D 4.18/1:122 (the Buddha, of Soṇa,daṇḍa); M 95.11/2:168 (the brahmin Caṅkī, of the brahmin youth Kāpaṭṭhika).

<sup>180</sup> “You discuss this matter with me,” *tumhe mayā saddhim mantavho asmim vacane*; alt: “You advise me on this matter.”

<sup>181</sup> Here the Buddha astutely employs a “horned dilemma” (*ubhato,koṭṭika pañha*, cf S 4:323 ff): if you (brahmin youths) think Ambaṭṭha is high-born, he should be capable to debating with me; if you want to debate with me on Ambaṭṭha’s behalf, then he must be low-born. This effectively prevents a confusing brawl, and the Buddha clearly establishes who is debating with whom. Understandably, the retinue of brahmin youths feel that Ambaṭṭha is capable of defending himself, or they, being young, have second thoughts about debating with a great teacher.

<sup>182</sup> “A reasonable question,” *saha,dhammiko pañho*. See foll n.

<sup>183</sup> *Ayam kho pana te Ambaṭṭha saha,dhammiko pañho āgacchati, akāmā vyākātabbo*. Comy explains *akāmā vyākātabbo* as meaning *attanā anicchantena pi vyākāritabbo, avassam vissajetabbo*, “even if he himself does not desire to answer, it is must necessarily be clarified.” (DA 1:263). See Intro (4.1).

<sup>184</sup> *Etth’eva te sattadhā muddhā phalissati*. On this head-splitting comment, see Intro (4.1).



“Answer now, Ambaṭṭha, now is not the time for you to remain silent! Ambaṭṭha, if you do not answer the question raised by your colleagues, *by the third time* you are asked, your head would surely split into seven pieces!”<sup>185</sup>

**1.21 VAJIRAPĀNĪ.** Now at that time, the yaksha Vajrapani [Thunderbolt-bearer],<sup>186</sup> wielding a great blazing club of glowing iron,<sup>187</sup> standing in the air above the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, thinking:

“If this Ambaṭṭha Māṇava does not answer the Blessed One regarding the reasonable [Dharma-based] question, then I will surely split his head into seven pieces!”

Then the Blessed One saw the yaksha Vajrapani, and the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha, too, saw him.<sup>188</sup>

1.21.2 Then the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha was terrified, filled with samvega [a sense of urgency],<sup>189</sup> his hairs standing on ends. He sought safety in the Blessed One; he sought shelter (like a cave) in the Blessed One; he sought refuge in the Blessed One.<sup>190</sup> Sitting very close<sup>191</sup> to the Blessed One, he said this:

“What is it that the master Gotama said? Please, master Gotama, say it again!”<sup>192</sup>

“*What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard, when the brahmins, old and aged, the teachers of teachers, were talking together regarding where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from and who the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas was?*”

### Ambaṭṭha’s descent

**1.22** When this was said, the brahmin youths were in a tumult, raising their voices loudly, thus:

“So, sirs, it looks like Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is lowborn! So, sirs, it looks like Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is not a householder’s son! So, sirs, it looks like Ambaṭṭha Māṇava is a son of a slave girl of the Sakyas! So, sirs, it looks like the Sakyas are Ambaṭṭha Māṇava’s masters! It looks like the ascetic Gotama speaks the Dharma [the truth] after all, and we had thought that he should not be trusted!”<sup>193</sup>

**1.23** Then this occurred to the Blessed One:

“These brahmin youths [96] humiliate Ambaṭṭha Māṇava too much with talk of a slave girl’s son. Let me now free him from this!”

1.23.2 Then the Blessed One said this to the brahmin youths:

“Brahmin youths, please do not humiliate Ambaṭṭha Māṇava so harshly with talk of a slave girl’s son!

The rishi [seer] Kaṇha was a mighty rishi.<sup>194</sup> He went to the Deccan country [Dakkhiṇa Janapada]<sup>195</sup> and learned the perfect mantras (*brahme mante*). Then he approached the rajah Okkāka and asked for the hand of her daughter Madda,rūpī<sup>196</sup> in marriage.

<sup>185</sup> On head-splitting, see Intro (4).

<sup>186</sup> Vajra,pānī (Skt) (*Vajira,pānī*, lit “thunderbolt in hand”): see Intro (4.2).

<sup>187</sup> *Ayo,kūṭa*, “iron club”: see Intro (4.2).

<sup>188</sup> Vajirapānī appears again before the debater Saccaka, with similar results: see **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35.13-14/-1:231 f) + SD 26.5 (3.3.2). According to the Tīkā there, Vajripānī only wishes to terrify Saccaka so that he gives up his wrongview (MAT:Be 2:206; cf DA 1:263 f).

<sup>189</sup> *Samvega*: see SD 9 (7f).

<sup>190</sup> *Bhagavantam yeva tāṇam gavesī bhagavantam yeva leṇam gavesī bhagavantam yeva saraṇam gavesī*: D 1:95. Cf S 4:315, 4:372; A 1:155 f; J 2:253.

<sup>191</sup> “Sitting very close (to),” *upanisīditvā*, from *upanisīdati* [*upa* + *nisīdati* (from √SAD, “to sit”) to sit close to or sit down near to (D 1:95; A 4:10; J 2:347; Pv 4.163 (ger *upanisajja* = *upanisīditvā*, PvA 242); Vism 269. There is a hint of humour here alluding to the Upanishad tradition that was prevalent during the Buddha’s time.

<sup>192</sup> Be Ce “*Kim etaṃ [Ke, kim me taṃ] bhavaṃ gotamo āha? Puna bhavaṃ gotamo bravitū [Ee brūmetū; Se brūtū] ti.*

<sup>193</sup> *Dhammavādīm yeva kira mayaṃ samaṇam Gotamaṃ apasādetabbaṃ amaññimhā ti.*

<sup>194</sup> Cf another dark-skinned great seer, Asita Devāla: **Assalāyana S** (M 93.18/2:156 f) & also SD 2.17(4.2).

<sup>195</sup> There were two well known caravan routes in the Buddha’s times: (1) “the northern road” (*uttara,patha*), leading into the Indus region of brahmanic culture and northwards past the Hindu Kush into Persia, Central Asia and the

The rajah Okkāka, displeased, said to him:

‘Who is this fellow of an ascetic, the son of a slave girl to ask for the hand of my daughter Madda,- rūpī!’

And angrily, he fitted an arrow.<sup>197</sup> But then he could neither let fly the arrow nor let go of it!<sup>198</sup>

Then, brahmin youths, the palace minister approached the rishi Kaṇha and said this:

‘Let the rajah be safe [Spare the rajah], bhante! Let the rajah be safe, bhante!’

‘The rajah shall be safe, but if he let fly the arrow downwards, it will split the earth as far as his realm extends!’

‘Let the rajah be safe, bhante! Let the country be safe, too [spare the country, too]!’

‘The rajah shall be safe, but if he let fly the arrow above, it will not rain throughout his realm for seven years!’

‘Let the rajah be safe, bhante! Let the country be safe! Let it rain, too!’

‘The rajah shall be safe; the country shall be safe; and it will rain. But the rajah must aim his arrow at the rajah’s crown prince! The prince shall be safe, his hair untouched.’<sup>199</sup>

Then, brahmin youths, the ministers told Okkāka:

‘Let Okkāka aim the arrow at the crown prince! The prince shall be safe, his hair untouched.’

Then the rajah Okkāka aimed his arrow at the crown prince. The prince was safe, not a hair touched.

But then the rajah Okkāka was terrified, filled with samvega [a sense of urgency], his hairs standing on ends, fearful of divine [97] punishment, gave away his daughter Madda,rūpī.<sup>200</sup>

Brahmin youths, please do not humiliate Ambaṭṭha Māṇava so harshly with talk of a slave girl’s son! The rishi Kaṇha was a great sage.’<sup>201</sup>

### The kshatriya’s supremacy

**1.24** DEFECT ON THE MOTHER’S SIDE. Then the Blessed One addressed the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Here, *a kshatriya boy cohabits*<sup>202</sup> *with a brahmin girl*, and they have a son as a result of that cohabitation. Would that son born of the kshatriya boy and the brahmin girl receive a seat or water<sup>203</sup> from the brahmins, or not?’

‘He would, master Gotama.’

1.24.2 ‘But would the brahmins allow him to partake of the ancestral offering (*saddha*),<sup>204</sup> or the fire oblation offering (*thālī,pāka*),<sup>205</sup> or the sacrifice (*yañña*),<sup>206</sup> or the guest meal (*pāhuna*),<sup>207</sup> or not?’

west; (2) “the southern road” (*dakkhiṇa,patha*; Skt *dakṣiṇā,patha*), southwards into the Deccan. See DD Kosambi 1976:111-120; caravan routes map, 136 f; also also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan>.

<sup>196</sup> Be Se *Madda,rūpī*; Ce *Mudda,rūpim* or *Mudda,rūpam*; Ee *Khudda,rūpim*.

<sup>197</sup> *Khurappa*, a sharp-edged arrow (D 1:96; M 1:429 (+ *vekaṇḍa*, another kind of arrow); Vism381); the usu word for “arrow” is *sara*.

<sup>198</sup> Comy notes that this is the result of Kaṇha’s using “Ambaṭṭha spell” (*ambaṭṭha,vijjā*) (DA 1:266).

<sup>199</sup> *Sotthi kumāro pallomo bhavissatī ti*.

<sup>200</sup> The lesson on the value of life is a powerful one. The king is made to feel what it is like to lose the life of someone dear, ie, his own crown prince.

<sup>201</sup> Here is an example of ironic humour in the role reversal: at §1.17, it is the brahmin youths who plead with the Buddha not to “humiliate” Ambaṭṭha, but here it is the reverse!

<sup>202</sup> *Samvāsam kappeyya*, alt: “were to have intercourse.”

<sup>203</sup> As tokens of respect and welcome. The water is for washing his feet, drinking, etc. In brahminical literature, there is the *arghya* (meaning “valuable”), ie perfumed water containing rice grains, flower petals, etc. The Paraskara Gr̥hya,sūtra (1.3.1) specifies 6 kinds of persons to whom the *arghya* reception is due: a teacher, officiating priest, father-in-law, the rajah, a friend, and the *snātaka* (a young brahmin who has just performed the ritual lustration, marking the transition from ‘student,’ *brahma,cārī*, to ‘householder,’ *gr̥hastha*), and describes the hospitality rite in detail (1.3.4 f).

<sup>204</sup> Skt *śrāddha* (D 1:97; A 1:166, 5:269-273; J 2:360; DA 1:267); making such an offering: V 1:7; D 2:39; Sn 1146. Traditionally, this is an annual ancestral ritual for the “fathers” (*pitṛ*; P *peta*) or ancestors, done in the 6<sup>th</sup> month, ie, Bhādra,pada (Aug-Sep). See (**Saddha**) **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 10.177/5:269-273) @ SD 2.6a (2). See Gonda 1980:441-456.

“They would, master Gotama.”

“But would the brahmins teach him to chant the mantras or not?”

“They would, master Gotama.”

“But would he be allowed access to their women or not?”

“He would, master Gotama.”

“But would the kshatriyas consecrate him as a kshatriya?”

“Certainly not, master Gotama.”

“What is the reason for that?”

“Because, master Gotama, he is unborn on the mother’s side.”

**1.25** DEFECT ON THE FATHER’S SIDE. “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Here, a brahmin boy cohabits with a kshatriya girl, and they have a son as a result of that cohabitation.

Would that son born of the brahmin boy and the kshatriya girl receive a seat or water from the brahmins, or not?”

“He would, master Gotama.”

1.25.2 “But would the brahmins allow him to partake of the ancestral offering (*saddha*), or the sthali-paka offering (*sthālī, pāka*), or the sacrifice (*yaññā*), or the guest meal (*pāhuna*), or not?”<sup>208</sup>

“They would, master Gotama.”

1.25.3 “But would the brahmins teach him to chant the mantras or not?”

“They would, master Gotama.” [98]

1.25.4 “But would he be allowed access to their women or not?”

“He would, master Gotama.”

1.25.5 “But would the kshatriyas consecrate him as a kshatriya?”

“Certainly not, master Gotama.”

“What is the reason for that?”

“Because, master Gotama, he is ‘unborn’ on the father’s side.”<sup>209</sup>

**1.26** “Therefore, Ambaṭṭha, whether we compare women with women, or men with men, the kshatriyas are superior, the brahmins lowly.”<sup>210</sup>

A BANISHED BRAHMIN. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Here, the brahmins would shave off the hair of a brahmin guilty of a certain offence [reason],<sup>211</sup> cut him dead with the ash-bag [have ash sprinkled on it],<sup>212</sup> and banish him from the realm or country.

<sup>205</sup> Skt *sthālī, pāka* (lit “cooked in an earthen vessel,” a Vedic ritual consisting of an offering of barley or rice cooked in milk used as an oblation: see Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka 6.4.19 (V 3:15; D 1:97 = DA 1:267; S 2:242, 5:384; A 1:166; J 1:186; Miln 249). Comy say this was “food offered during blessing rituals, etc” (*maṅgal’ādi, bhatte*, DA 1:267). The *sthālī, pāka* is performed on every Prathama (the first day of lunar month). *Sthālī* is the pot in which rice is cooked, and which must be placed in the *aupasana* (the family’s sacred fire). The cooked rice, called *charu*, must be offered to the same fire. See Gonda 1980:423-427. On *sthālī, pāka* meaning simply “tray, dish, salver,” see **Pañca-ratha, sata S** (S 17.36,2) n @ SD 22.6b.

<sup>206</sup> Skt *yajña*: D 1:129 f, 137 f; DA 1:204-107. See **Pasenadi Yañña S** (S 3.9/1:75 f), SD 22.11. On *mahā yañña*, see M 2:204; DhsA 145 (cf DhsA:PR 193). A *yajna* (meaning “sacrifice”) is a Vedic ritual, which may be simply an offering of clarified butter into a fire, or it may involve 17 priests in an elaborate 12-day ritual incl the building of a large fire altar as in the *agni, cayana* (“piled fire,” ie, a fire altar on a raised level, such as bricks). The *yajna* always includes a fire, Sanskrit mantras (Vedic verses), and some sort off offering. In the larger public rituals, it was common to have animal sacrifice/s. See PED: *yañña*.

<sup>207</sup> D 1:97 = M 2:154; Vism 230; DA 1:267. Skt *prāhavana*, “meal for a guest”; from Skt *prāhuna* or *prāghūna*, “guest”; cf *prāhavanīya* (P *pāhuneyya*), “worthy of being received as a guest.” Cf *āhuna, pāhuna* (“sacrifice and offering”), VvA 155. See SD 15.10a (4).

<sup>208</sup> The Skt forms of these terms are, respectively, *śrāddha, sthālī, pāka, yajñā, and pāhuna* (ts).

<sup>209</sup> *Pitito hi bho Gotama anuppano ti*. That is, impure on the father’s side.

<sup>210</sup> The Buddha is *not* endorsing the notion of class superiority in either case, but bringing the logic of the situation to its own conclusion.

<sup>211</sup> *Pakarane*, which Comy glosses as *dosa* (“fault,” DA 1:267), but the same word at S 22.80.1/3:91 is glosses as *kāraṇa* (“reason,” SA 2:297); cf *kismicid eva pakarane aparajjhati* (“he is wrong on certain occasions,” Miln 189).

Now, would he receive a seat or water from the brahmins, or not?”

“Certainly not, master Gotama.”

1.26.2 “But would the brahmins allow him to partake of the ancestral offering [Skt *śrāddha*], or the sthalipaka offering [*sthālī, pāka*], or the sacrifice [*yajñā*], or the guest meal (*pāhuna*), or not?”

“Certainly not, master Gotama.”

“But would the brahmins teach him to chant the mantras or not?”

“Certainly not, master Gotama.”

“But would he be allowed access to their women or not?”

“He would be disallowed, master Gotama.”

**1.27** A BANISHED KSHATRIYA. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Here, the kshatriyas would shave off the hair of a kshatriya guilty of a certain offence [reason], cut him dead with the ash-bag [have ash sprinkled on it], and banish him from the realm or country.

Now, would he receive a seat or water from the brahmins, or not?”

“He would, master Gotama.”

1.27.2 “But would the brahmins allow him to partake of the ancestral offering [*śrāddha*], or the sthalipaka offering [*sthālī, pāka*], or the sacrifice [*yajñā*], or the guest meal (*pāhuna*), or not?”

“They would, master Gotama.”

“But would the brahmins teach him to chant the mantras or not?”

“They would, master Gotama.”

“But would he be allowed access to their women or not?”

“He would be allowed, master Gotama.”

1.27.3 “Now, Ambaṭṭha, such a kshatriya is one fallen into the greatest degradation, [99] inasmuch as he had his head shaven, cut dead with the ash-bag [had ash sprinkled on it], and banished from the realm or country.

Thus, Ambaṭṭha, even though the kshatriya has fallen into the greatest degradation, still the kshatriyas are superior, the brahmins inferior.<sup>213</sup>

**1.28** Now, Ambaṭṭha, this verse was uttered by the brahma Sanañ,kumāra,<sup>214</sup> thus:<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> *Assa, puṭena vadhitvā* [Be *Bhassa-* or *Bhasma-* for *Assa-*], lit “having been killed with a bag of ash”; as at A 4.242,3/2:242,9-11 (= AA 3:216,20). See CPD: *assa, puṭa* for details.

<sup>213</sup> “The major point of this section,” **Brian Black** notes, “is to establish that the brahmins are actually more relaxed [with regard to mixed marriages], and thus less pure, about which mixed unions they recognize.” (2007b:9). **Uma Chakravarti** here remarks: “[T]he child of a union between a *khattiya* and a *brāhmaṇa* was allowed to participate in all the activities of the *brāhmaṇas*. This would include participation in making offerings to the gods and having access to *brāhmaṇa* women. However, *khattiyas* would not permit the child of such a union to participate in the *abhiseka* (consecration) ceremony of the *khattiyas*. The Buddha argued from this that *khattiyas* were higher (*setṭha*) and the *brāhmaṇas* inferior (*hīna*) to them.” (1996:110 f)

<sup>214</sup> Sanañ,kumāra. See foll n.

<sup>215</sup> Sanañ,kumāra’s verse is well known. Lines cd are explained in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.28/3:99) in terms of the *sāmañña,phala*. See also **Aggañña S** (D 27.32/1:97, sutta conclusion); **Sekha S** (M 53.25/1:358, spoken by Ānanda), **Sanañ,kumāra S** (S 6.11/1:153, verse only), **Mahā Kappina S** (S 21.11/2:284, with Dh 387), & **Mora, nivāpa S** (A 11.11/5:327 f); cf **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4.13-16/1:121, on the true brahmin), **Jana, vasabha S** (D 18.17-29/2:210-218, on Sanañ,kumāra). (At S 2:284, where it appears with Dh 387, it is attributed to the Buddha, giving it even greater endorsement). The name **Sanañ,kumāra** means or “Ever Young” or “Eternal Virgin.” Like the true brahmins of old, he practised “the celibate divine life” (*komāra, brahma, cariya*, A 3:224 ff), a term I think that is better rendered as “living the celibate ever since he was just a boy,” since *brahma, cariya* itself connotes celibacy. Buddha-ghosa says that in a former birth, Sanañ,kumāra practised *jhāna* while yet a boy (*kumāra*) at the stage where his hair was tied in five top-knots and was reborn in the brahma world. Even as a brahma he often retained his youthful looks, hence his name (MA 3:33; SA 1:219). The oldest mention of **Sanat,kumāra** (Skt) is in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (ch 7). In the Mahābharata (3:185, Bombay ed), he expresses a sentiment very similar to that of his verse here. Rhys Davids (D:RD 2:292 n3, cf 1:121 n1) sees the Sanañ,kumāra story as the Indian counterpart of the Arthurian legend of Galahad.

*Khattiyo seṭṭho jane tasmim  
ye gotta,paṭisārino  
vijjā,caraṇa,sampanno  
so seṭṭho deva,mānuse.*

The kshatriya is the best in this generation  
for those who look up to clan.  
The one endowed with wisdom and conduct:  
he is the best amongst gods and humans.

1.28.2 This verse, Ambaṭṭha, is well-sung, not ill-sung, by the Brahma Sanañkumāra, well-spoken, not ill-spoken, endowed with meaning, not without meaning—I approve of it. I too, Ambaṭṭha, say thus:

The kshatriya is the best in this generation for those who value clan;  
But the one endowed with knowledge and conduct is the best amongst gods and humans.

[Here ends the first recital cycle, *bhāṇavāra*.]<sup>216</sup>

### Talk on knowledge and conduct

**2.1** “But what, master Gotama, is this conduct (*caraṇa*), and what is this knowledge (*vijjā*)?”

“Ambaṭṭha, in the case of the peerless accomplishment of conduct and knowledge,  
one does not talk of birth [class] (*jāti*),  
and one does not talk of clan (*gotta*), and  
and one does not talk of conceit (*māna*), thus:

‘You are as worthy as I am’ or ‘You are not as worthy as I am.’

2.1.2 Ambaṭṭha, such talk is about taking in marriage (*āvāha*), or giving in marriage (*vivāha*), or taking and giving in marriage (*āvāha,vivāha*). Here, Ambaṭṭha, one talks thus, ‘You are as worthy as I am’ or ‘You are not as worthy as I am.’<sup>217</sup>

2.1.3 Ambaṭṭha, for whomever are bound by the talk of birth [class], or bound by the talk of clan, or bound by the talk of conceit, or bound by the talk of taking or giving in marriage, they are far from the peerless accomplishment of conduct and knowledge.

Ambaṭṭha, by the abandoning of  
the bond of talk of birth [class], and  
the bond of talk of clan,  
the bond of talk of conceit, and  
the bond of the talk of taking and giving in marriage, **[D 1:100]**

one realizes the peerless accomplishment of conduct and knowledge.

<sup>216</sup> This break conveniently divides the sutta into two parts: the first centres around the Buddha’s debate with Ambaṭṭha, and the second, the *sāmañña,phala* teaching (to Ambaṭṭha) and Pokkhara,sāti’s conversion.

<sup>217</sup> Bloodline or birth (*jāti*) is a concern of the world, not of spirituality. *Jāti* asserts the notion of a biological family, but the Dharma breaks all bounds for the spiritual family to be possible. Similarly, spiritual renunciation is not “leaving” one’s family, but rather giving up the notion of a *biological* for an unconditional acceptance of all beings, ie, seeing all life as a *spiritual* family. See also Uma Chakravarti 1987:110.

## The Fruits of Reclusheship

(*Sāmañña,phala*)

### (A) Training in Moral Virtue (*sīla,sikkhā*)<sup>218</sup>

2.2 “But, master Gotama, what is this conduct, and what is this wisdom?”

<sup>219</sup>[D 2.40] “Here, Ambaṭṭha, there arises in the world the Tathāgata [Thus Come One], an Arhat and fully self-awakened, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-gone, knower of the worlds, unexcelled trainer of tamable people, teacher of beings human and divine, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Maras, and its Brahmas, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers<sup>220</sup> and people, he makes it known to others. He teaches the Dharma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with meaning and phrasing. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

[D 2.41] A houselord or houselord’s son, hearing the Dharma, [D 1:63] gains faith<sup>221</sup> in the Tathāgata and reflects:

“The household life is stifling, a dusty path.<sup>222</sup> The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?”

So, after some time, he abandons his accumulation of wealth, great and small; he gives up his circle of relatives, great and small; shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

[D 2.42] When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code [Pāṭimokkha], possessed of proper conduct and resort.<sup>223</sup> Having taken up the rules of training, he trains himself in them, seeing danger in the slightest faults. He comes to be endowed with wholesome bodily and

<sup>218</sup> In reality, the Sutta here does not name section as such. Ambaṭṭha S divides the *sāmañña,phala* section into 2 parts: “Conduct” (*carāṇa*) [§2.2a-D 1.82] and “Knowledge” (*vijjā*) [§D 1.83-2.98]. See n at header “II. Accomplishment of Conduct” below (just before D 1.28), & see also Gethin 2001:207 n79. For a summary of the section on moral virtue, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), SD 8.10 (3).

<sup>219</sup> As at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.40-42/1:62 f), *mutatis mutandis*.

<sup>220</sup> *deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati,deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti,deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi,deva*), ie the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Arhats. (Nc 307; KhA 123). See §2, “Your majesty” n.

<sup>221</sup> “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka,saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati,saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8 401,23); also called *avecca-p,pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith is its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001:107; my emphases).

<sup>222</sup> *Sambādho gharavāso rajā,patho*. There is a wordplay on *sambādha*, “crowded, stifling, narrow, full of hindrances.” The word *sambādha* also refers to the male organ (V 1:216, 2:134) or the female organ (V 4:259; Sn 609; J 1:61, 4:260).

<sup>223</sup> “Resort” (*gocara*), lit “the cow’s routine path or pasture.” Here it refers to two aspects of the renunciant’s life. In the Canon, it refers to places that are regarded as suitable for collecting almsfood (V 2:208). In this sense, *agocara* refers to places that are unsuitable for renunciants to resort to (whether for alms or visit) (D 1:63 = It 118 M 1:33 S 5:187 It 96; cf Dh 22). In Comys, *gocara* refers to places suitable for meditation (Vism 127). We can also take *gocara* here in the psychological sense of *āramana*, that is, sense-objects. In other words, one “possessed of proper conduct and resort” means “accomplished in proper conduct of body and of mind.”

verbal deeds, his livelihood is purified, and he is possessed of moral virtue. He guards the sense-doors, is possessed of mindfulness and clear knowledge, and is content.

## I. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MORAL VIRTUE<sup>224</sup>

(*Sīla, sampadā*)

### 1. THE SHORT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE<sup>225</sup>

(*Cūla, sīla*)

[Brahma, jāla Sutta, D 1.8-27/1:4-11 = Sāmañña, phala Sutta, D 2.43-62/1:68]

#### 2.2.2 And how, Ambaṭṭha, is a monk **accomplished in moral virtue?**

##### **Right bodily conduct**

[D 1.8]<sup>226</sup> (1) Here, Ambaṭṭha, having abandoned the destruction of life, the recluse Gotama abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and weapon laid down, conscientious,<sup>227</sup> merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, the recluse Gotama abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life, living apart, refraining from the sexual act,<sup>228</sup> the way of the village.<sup>229</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.<sup>230</sup>

##### **Right speech**

[D 1.9] (4) Having abandoned false speech, the recluse Gotama abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, keeps to the truth as his bond, trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech the recluse Gotama abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks words of concord.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, the recluse Gotama abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are humane, soothing, loving, touching, urbane, and delightful and pleasant to the multitude.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

<sup>224</sup> This whole section is popularly known as the “moralities” or “sīlas” (*sīla*), dealing with the moral virtue of a monastic.

<sup>225</sup> These three sections (comprising 13 items or groups) on moral virtue occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the first 13 suttas and may once have formed a separate “tract” (D:RD 1:3 n1). See Gethin 2001: 195 f. See Intro (3) above.

<sup>226</sup> Cp §§8-20 with **Cūla Hatthipadopama S** (M 27.11-13/1:179 f) = **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38.31-33/-1:267).

<sup>227</sup> *lajjī*, “feel shame, modest,” explain in the Comy on S 1:73 as “one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*).” Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

<sup>228</sup> *Brahma, cariya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie celibacy. DA points out that it involves refraining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse.

<sup>229</sup> *gāma, dhamma*, ie the way of the householder, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses).

<sup>230</sup> *Idam pi’ssa hoti silasmin. Brahma, jāla S* refrain: *Thus the ordinary person would praise the Tathāgata*, D 1.8.

(7) Having abandoned idle chatter, the recluse Gotama abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is true, what is beneficial. He speaks on the Doctrine and the Discipline. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, **[D 1:5]** backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.<sup>231</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

### General

[D 1.10] (8) The recluse Gotama abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.<sup>232</sup>

### Sāmaṇera, sikkhā 6-10

(9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.<sup>233</sup>

(10) The recluse Gotama abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.

(11) The recluse Gotama abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.

(12) The recluse Gotama abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.

(13) The recluse Gotama abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].

### General

(14) The recluse Gotama abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat; women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) The recluse Gotama abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].<sup>234</sup>

(16) The recluse Gotama abstains from running messages [or errands].

(17) The recluse Gotama abstains from buying and selling [bartering and trading].

(18) The recluse Gotama abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures.

(19) The recluse Gotama abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) The recluse Gotama abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

## 2. THE MEDIUM SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

(*majjhima, sīla*)

[D 1.11] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to damaging seeds and plant life such as these: plants propagated from roots, stems, joints, buddings, and seeds—the recluse Gotama abstains from damaging seeds and plant life such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. **[D 1:6]**

[D 1.12] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to consuming stored-up goods such as these: stored-up food, stored-up drinks, stored-up clothing, stored-up vehicles, stored-up bedding, stored-up scents, and stored-up meat—the recluse Gotama abstains from consuming stored-up goods such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.13] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to watching shows such as these: dancing, singing, music, plays, ballad recitations, hand-clapping, cymbals and drums, painted scenes,<sup>235</sup> acrobatic and conjuring tricks,<sup>236</sup> elephant fights, horse fights, buffalo fights,

<sup>231</sup> *attha, saṃhitam.*

<sup>232</sup> Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

<sup>233</sup> “Improper times” here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

<sup>234</sup> The Buddha however accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍaka and Visākhā, which were received in the name of the Sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

<sup>235</sup> *Sobha, nagarakam*, “of the city of Sobha” (the city of the Gandharvas or heavenly musicians). RD thinks it refers to a ballet with fairy scenes. Bodhi: “art exhibitions.”



bull fights, goat fights, ram fights, cock fights, quail fights; fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, war-games, roll calls, battle arrays, and troop movements—the recluse Gotama abstains from watching shows such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.14] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to heedless and idle games such as these—

<i>aṭṭha,pada</i>	eight-row chess, <sup>237</sup>
<i>dasa,pada</i>	ten-row chess,
<i>ākāsa</i>	chess in the air, <sup>238</sup>
<i>parihāra,patha</i>	hopscotch,
<i>santika</i>	spillikins <sup>239</sup> [or jackstraws],
<i>khalika</i>	dice,
<i>ghaṭṭika</i>	stick games [hitting a short stick with a longer one], <sup>240</sup>
<i>salāka,hattha</i>	hand-pictures, <sup>241</sup>
<i>akkha</i>	ball-games [marbles],
<i>paṅga,cīra</i>	blowing through toy pipes [playing whistling games with folded leaves], <sup>242</sup>
<i>vaṅkaka</i>	playing with toy ploughs, <sup>243</sup>
<i>mokkhaṇḍika</i>	turning somersaults [acrobatics], <sup>244</sup>
<i>ciṅgulika</i>	playing with toy windmills, <sup>245</sup>
<i>pattālaka</i>	toy measures,
<i>rathaka</i>	toy chariots, <sup>246</sup> [D 1:7]
<i>dhanuka</i>	toy bows,
<i>akkharika</i>	guessing letters drawn in the air or on one's back, <sup>247</sup>
<i>manesika</i>	guessing thoughts,
<i>yathā,vajja</i>	mimicking deformities—

the recluse Gotama abstains from heedless and idle games such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.15] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to using high and luxurious furnishings such as these<sup>248</sup>—over-sized couches,<sup>249</sup> couches adorned with carved animals, long-haired coverlets, multi-colored patchwork coverlets, white woollen coverlets, woollen coverlets embroidered with flowers or animal figures, stuffed quilts, coverlets with fringes, silk coverlets embroidered with gems; large woollen carpets; elephant, horse, and chariot rugs, antelope-hide rugs, deer-hide rugs;

<sup>236</sup> *Caṇḍālaṃ vaṃsaṃ dhopaṇaṃ*, an obscure phrase. The performers were presumable of the lowest caste. DA thinks of an iron ball (used for juggling?). Cf **Citta Sambhūta J** (J 4:390) where the phrase appears.

<sup>237</sup> The Sinhalese *sanna* says that each of these games was played with dice and pieces such as kings, etc. The word for the pieces (“men”) is *poru* (from *purisa*).

<sup>238</sup> Possibly, blindfold chess.

<sup>239</sup> Or, spellicans.

<sup>240</sup> Rhys Davids: “Something like ‘tipcat.’ *Sim-kelīmaya* in Sinhalese.” (D:RD 1:10 n5)

<sup>241</sup> The hand is dipped in paint or dye, then struck on the ground or a wall, so that the player creates the figure of an elephant, a horse, etc. See J 1:220. Thai literature, the boy trickster and genius Sii Thanonchai (Śrī Dhanañjaya) is well known for this skill.

<sup>242</sup> Sinh *pat-kulal*. Morris (JPTS 1889:205) compares it to the Marathī *pungī*.

<sup>243</sup> Skt *vr̥ka*. See JPTS 1889:206.

<sup>244</sup> See V 1:276; also JPTS 1885:49.

<sup>245</sup> Cf *ciṅgulāyivā* (A 3.15.2/1:112) (Morris, JPTS 1885:50).

<sup>246</sup> This and the previous five are mentioned at M 1:266 as children's games.

<sup>247</sup> This shows that letters, perhaps writing, were known in 5<sup>th</sup> century India, and certainly by Asoka's time.

<sup>248</sup> This list recurs at V 1:192 = 2:163 = A 1:181.

<sup>249</sup> *Āsandin*, “moveable settees, high, and six feet long” (RD). The Sinh *Sanna* explains that this is “a long chair for supporting the whole body.” See D:RD 1:11 n4 for discussion.

couches with awnings, couches with red cushions for the head and feet—the recluse Gotama abstains from using high and luxurious furnishings such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.16] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, enjoy scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these: rubbing powders into the body, massaging with oils, bathing in perfumed water, kneading the limbs, using mirrors, ointments, garlands, scents, creams, face-powders, mascara [darkening one's eye-lashes], bracelets, head-bands, decorated walking sticks, ornamented water-bottles, swords, fancy sunshades, decorated sandals, turbans, gems, yak-tail whisks, long-fringed white robes—the recluse Gotama abstains from using scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.17] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to low talk,<sup>250</sup> such as these: talking about kings, robbers, ministers of state; armies, alarms, and battles; food and drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, and scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women [D 1:8] and heroes; the gossip of the street and the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity [philosophical discussions of the past and the future], the creation of the world and of the sea, and talk of whether things exist or not [or, talk about gain and loss]<sup>251</sup>—the recluse Gotama abstains from talking about low topics such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.18] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to debates such as these—

‘You do not understand this Teaching and Discipline [this Dharma-Vinaya]. I understand this Teaching and Discipline. What could you understand of this Teaching and Discipline? You are practising wrongly. I am practising rightly. I am being consistent. You are inconsistent. What should be said first you said later. What should be said after you said first. What you took so long to think out has been refuted. Your viewpoint has been overthrown. You are defeated. Go and try to salvage your viewpoint; extricate yourself if you can!’<sup>252</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.19] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are given to relaying messages and running errands for people such as these: kings, ministers of state, noble warriors, brahmins, houselords, or youths [who say],

‘Go here, go there, take this there, fetch that here’—the recluse Gotama abstains from running messages and errands for people such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.20] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, engage in deceitful pretensions [to attainments], flattery [for gain], subtle insinuation or hinting [for gain], pressuring [for offerings], and pursuing gain with gain, the recluse Gotama abstains from such pretensions and flattery.<sup>253</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. [D 1:9]

<sup>250</sup> *Tiracchāna, kathā*, lit animal talk. As animals mostly walk parallel to the earth, so this kind of talk does not lead on upwards. Cf Lohicca S (D 1:228).

<sup>251</sup> *Iti, bhavābhāva, kathā*, may be rendered as “being and non-being” or as “profit and loss,” but according to Walshe, the philosophical sense (as in Horner and Ñāṇamoli translations of Sandaka S, M 76) is preferable.

<sup>252</sup> This is stock: **Brahmajāla S** (D 1:8), **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 1:66), **Pāsādika S** (D 3:117), **Saṅgīti S** (D 3:210), **Mahā Sakuludāyī S** (M 2:3), **Sāmagāma S** (M 2:245), **Hāliddakāni S 1** (S 3:12), **Viggāhika Kathā S** (S 5:418) and **Mahā Niddesa** (Nm 1:173). See Brahmajāla S, D 1:2 f. Cf **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22) where a similar statement is made regarding the wrong reason for learning the Dharma (M 22.10/1:133).

<sup>253</sup> For details, see Vism 1.61-82.

### 3. THE GREAT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

(*mahā,sīla*)

[D 1.21] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

<i>aṅga</i>	reading marks on the limbs [eg, palmistry, sole-reading];
<i>nimitta</i>	reading omens and signs;
<i>uppāda</i>	interpreting celestial events [lightning, falling stars, comets];
<i>supīna</i>	interpreting dreams;
<i>lakkhaṇa</i>	reading marks on the body [eg, physiognomy, phrenology];
<i>mūsikācchinna</i>	reading marks on cloth gnawed by mice;
<i>aggi,homa</i>	offering fire oblations;
<i>dabbi,homa</i>	oblations from a ladle;
<i>thusa,homa</i>	oblations of husks;
<i>kaṇa,homa</i>	oblations of rice powder;
<i>taṇḍula,homa</i>	oblations of rice grains;
<i>sappi,homa</i>	oblations of ghee;
<i>tela,homa</i>	oblations of oil;
<i>mukha,homa</i>	offering oblations using oral spells;
<i>lohita,homa</i>	offering blood-sacrifices;
<i>aṅga,vijjā</i>	making predictions based on the fingertips;
<i>vatthu,vijjā</i>	determining whether the site for a proposed house or garden is propitious or not [geomancy];
<i>khatta,vijjā</i>	making predictions for officers of state;
<i>siva,vijjā</i>	laying demons in a cemetery;
<i>bhūta,vijjā</i>	laying spirits;
<i>bhūri,vijjā</i>	reciting house-protection charms [or knowledge of charms recited by those living in an earthen house];
<i>ahi.vijjā</i>	snake charming;
<i>visa,vijjā</i>	treating poisoning;
<i>vicchikā,vijjā</i>	curing scorpion-stings;
<i>mūsika,vijjā</i>	curing rat-bites;
<i>sakuṇa,vijjā</i>	interpreting bird sounds;
<i>vāyasa,vijjā</i>	interpreting the cawing of crows
<i>pakkajjhāna</i>	foretelling the remaining duration of life;
<i>sara,paritta</i>	reciting charms for protection against arrows; and
<i>miga,cakka</i>	reciting charms to understand the calls of wild animals.

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.22] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

<i>maṇi,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky gems;
<i>daṇḍa,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky staffs;
<i>vattha,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky garments;
<i>asi,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky swords;
<i>usu,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky arrows;
<i>dhanu,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky bows;
<i>avudha,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky weapons;
<i>itthi,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky women;
<i>purisa,lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky men;

<i>kumāra, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky boys;
<i>kumāri, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky girls;
<i>dāsa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky male slaves;
<i>dāsi, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky female slaves;
<i>hatthi, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky elephants;
<i>assa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky horses;
<i>mahisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky buffaloes;
<i>usabha, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky bulls;
<i>go, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky cows;
<i>aja, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky goats;
<i>maṇḍa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky rams;
<i>kukkuṭa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky fowl;
<i>vaṭṭaka, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky quails;
<i>godhā, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky lizards [or iguana];
<i>kaṇṇikā, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky long-eared rodents, <sup>254</sup>
<i>kaṭṭhapa, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky tortoises;
<i>miga, lakkhaṇa</i>	determining lucky and unlucky animals

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.23] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting thus: [D 1:10]

the leaders [rajahs]<sup>255</sup> will march forth [advance];

the leaders will return [retreat];

our leaders will attack, and their leaders will retreat;

their leaders will attack, and our leaders will retreat;

there will be triumph for our leaders and defeat for their leaders;

there will be triumph for their leaders and defeat for our leaders;

thus there will be triumph, thus there will be defeat

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.24] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting thus:

*canda-g, gāho bhavissati* there will be a lunar eclipse;

*suriya-g, gāho bhavissati* there will be a solar eclipse;

*nakkhatta-g, gāho bhavissati* there will be an occultation of an asterism;

*candima, suriyānaṃ patha,-*

*gamaṇaṃ bhavissati*

the sun and moon will go their normal courses;

*candima, suriyānaṃ uppatha,-*

*gamaṇaṃ bhavissati*

the sun and moon will go off-course;

*nakkhattānaṃ patha,-*

*gamaṇaṃ bhavissati*

the asterisms will go their normal course;

*nakkhattānaṃ uppatha,-*

*gamaṇaṃ bhavissati*

the asterisms will go off-course;

*ukkā, pāto bhavissati*

there will be a meteor shower;

*disā, dāho bhavissati*

there will be a darkening of the sky;

<sup>254</sup> *Kaṇṇika, lakkhaṇaṃ*, from *kaṇṇa*, “ear.” DA thinks it means either ear-rings or house-gables, both of which do not fit here. Walshe follows the Thai tr which, probably following an old tradition, has *tun*, “bamboo-rat” (see McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*, p371). Franke says “an animal that is always mentioned with the hare” and considers that it must mean an animal with long ears.

<sup>255</sup> *Raṇṇaṃ* (gen pl), ie the joint leaders (rajah) of a republican state in ancient India.

<i>bhūmi,cālo bhavissati</i>	there will be an earthquake;
<i>deva,dundubhi bhavissati</i>	there will be thunder (coming from a clear sky);
<i>candīma,suriya,nakkhattānaṃ uggamaṇaṃ ogamaṇaṃ saṃkilesaṃ vodānaṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the sun, moon, and asterisms;
<i>evaṃ vipāko canda-g,gāho bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the lunar eclipse;
<i>evaṃ vipāko suriya-g,gāho bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the solar eclipse;
<i>evaṃ vipāko nakkhatta-g, gāho bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the occultation of the asterism;
<i>evaṃ vipāko candīma,suriyānaṃ patha,gamaṇaṃ bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the sun and moon going their normal courses;
<i>evaṃ vipāko candīma,suriyānaṃ uppatha,gamaṇaṃ bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the sun and moon going off-course;
<i>evaṃ vipāko nakkhattānaṃ patha,- gamaṇaṃ bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the asterisms going off-course;
<i>evaṃ vipāko nakkhattānaṃ uppatha,-gamaṇaṃ bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the asterisms going off-course;
<i>evaṃ vipāko ukkā,pāto bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the meteor shower;
<i>evaṃ vipāko disā,dāho bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the darkening of the sky;
<i>evaṃ vipāko bhūmi,cālo bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the earthquake;
<i>evaṃ vipāko deva,dundubhi bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the thunderclap (coming from a clear sky);
<i>evaṃ vipāko candīma,suriya,- nakkhattānaṃ uggamaṇaṃ ogamaṇaṃ saṃkilesaṃ vodānaṃ bhavissati</i>	such will be the result of the rising, the setting, the darkening, or the brightening of the sun, of the moon, and of the asterisms;

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

Thus [D 1:11] would the worldling speak when praising the Tathagata.

[D 1.25] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting thus:

<i>subbuṭṭhikā bhavissati</i>	there will be abundant rain;
<i>dubbuṭṭhikā bhavissati</i>	there will be a drought;
<i>subhikkhaṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be plenty;
<i>dubhikkhaṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be famine;
<i>khemāṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be rest and security;
<i>bhayaṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be danger;
<i>rogo bhavissati</i>	there will be disease;
<i>ārogyaṃ bhavissati</i>	there will be health [freedom from disease];
<i>muddā</i>	or, they earn their living by counting,
<i>gaṇanā</i>	by accounting;
<i>saṅkhāna</i>	by calculation;
<i>kāveyya</i>	by composing poetry; or
<i>lokāyata</i>	by teaching hedonistic arts and doctrines

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.26] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

<i>āvāhana</i>	calculating auspicious dates for bringing in the bride (marriage);
<i>vivāhana</i>	calculating auspicious dates for bringing in the bridegroom,
<i>saṁvadana</i>	calculating auspicious dates for betrothals;
<i>vivadana</i>	calculating auspicious dates for divorces;
<i>saṁkiraṇa</i>	calculating auspicious dates for collecting debts;
<i>vikiraṇa</i>	calculating auspicious dates for making investments and loans;
<i>subhaga,karaṇa</i>	reciting charms for becoming attractive;
<i>dubbhaga,karaṇa</i>	reciting charms for becoming unattractive;
<i>viruddha,gabbha,karaṇa</i>	curing women who have undergone miscarriages or abortions [or, reviving the fetuses of abortive women], <sup>256</sup>
<i>jivhā nittaddana</i>	reciting spells to bind a person's tongue;
<i>hanu,saṁhanana</i>	reciting spells to bind a person's tongue, or to paralyze his jaws;
<i>hatthābhijappana</i>	reciting spells to make one lose control of one's hands;
<i>kaṇṇa,jappana</i>	reciting spells to bring on deafness;
<i>ādāsa,pañha</i>	getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a mirror;
<i>kumāri,pañha</i>	getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a young girl;
<i>deva,pañha</i>	getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a spirit medium;
<i>ādicc'upaṭṭhāna</i>	worshipping the sun;
<i>mahat'upaṭṭhāna</i>	worshipping Mahā Brahmā; <sup>257</sup>
<i>abbhujjalana</i>	bringing forth flames from the mouth; and
<i>sir'avhāyana</i>	invoking the goddess of luck

—the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 1.27] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

<i>santi,kamma</i>	promising gifts to deities in return for favors;
<i>paṇidhi,kamma</i>	fulfilling such promises;
<i>bhūri,kamma</i>	demonology;
<i>vassa,kamma</i>	teaching house-protection spells;
<i>vossa,kamma</i>	inducing virility and impotence;
<i>vatthu,kamma</i>	consecrating sites for construction;
<i>vatthu,parikirāṇa</i>	giving ceremonial mouthwashes;
<i>ācamana</i>	giving ceremonial ablution;
<i>nahāpana</i>	giving ceremonial bathing;
<i>juhana</i>	offering sacrificial fires;
<i>vamana</i>	preparing emetics;
<i>virecana</i>	preparing purgatives;
<i>uddha,virecana</i>	preparing expectorants;
<i>adho,virecana</i>	preparing diuretics;
<i>sīse,virecana</i>	preparing headache cures;
<i>kaṇṇa,tela</i>	preparing ear-oil;
<i>netta,tappana</i>	preparing eye-drops;
<i>natthu,kamma</i>	preparing oil for treatment through the nose;
<i>añjana</i>	preparing collyrium [eye ointment];
<i>paccañjana</i>	preparing counter-medicines;

<sup>256</sup> *Viruddha,gabbha,karaṇam*.

<sup>257</sup> *Mahat'upaṭṭhānaṁ* = *Mahā,brahma,pāriyācariyā* (DA 1:97). Cf UA 75 where it simply means “rendered great service” (UA:M 1:115).

*sālākiya* curing cataracts;  
*sallakattika* practising surgery;  
*dāraka,tikicchā* practising as a children’s doctor;  
*mūla,bhesajja anuppādāna* administering medicines for the body; and  
*osadhīnam paṭimokkha* treatments to cure their after-effects  
 —the recluse Gotama abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.<sup>258</sup>  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

## II. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF CONDUCT<sup>259</sup> (Carāṇa,sampadā)

### **Confidence through practising the above moralities**

[D 2.63] A monk, Ambaṭṭha, thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger anywhere owing to his restraint through moral virtue. Just as a head-anointed noble kshatriya rajah who has defeated his enemies sees no danger anywhere from his enemies, [D 1:70] in the same way the monk thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger owing to his restraint through moral virtue.

Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, he experiences within himself a joy that is blameless. This is how, Ambaṭṭha, a monk is **accomplished in moral virtue**.<sup>260</sup>

### (B) TRAINING IN MENTAL DEVELOPMENT (Samādhi,sikkhā)

#### Sense-restraint (Custody of the senses)

[D 2.64] And how, Ambaṭṭha, does a monk guard the sense-doors?

<sup>261</sup>Here, Ambaṭṭha, when a monk sees a form with the eye, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**,<sup>262</sup> insofar as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty so that the evil, wholesome states of covetousness and displeasure<sup>263</sup> might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrain-

<sup>258</sup> It is the practice of medicine for gain that is here condemned. (Walshe)

<sup>259</sup> Only here, this section is listed as *carāṇa,sampadā*. In D 1 & 2, it is simply listed, without this heading. This section ends at [S 2.82] below. See n on *sāmañña,phala* at §2.2a.

<sup>260</sup> The “moralities” (*sīla*) stock passage, which begins at [D 1.8] §2.2b ends here. It here constitutes the “accomplishment of conduct” (*carāṇa,sampanna*) section.

<sup>261</sup> This whole para: *Idha mahārāja bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-g,gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g,gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā,domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā an-vāssaveyyuṃ, tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati.* On *Na nimitta-g,gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g,gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature),” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda,rāga,vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi,matta,vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuvyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.

<sup>262</sup> See *Nimitta & anuvyañjana*, SD 19.14.

<sup>263</sup> “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā,domanassaṃ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā,domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): “Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha,somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the

ed. He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the eye-faculty.

When he hears a sound with the ear,... He...has restraint of the ear-faculty.  
 When he smells a smell with the nose,... He...has restraint of the nose-faculty.  
 When he tastes a taste with the tongue,... He...has restraint of the tongue-faculty.  
 When he feels a touch with the body,... He...has restraint of the body-faculty.

When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**, insofar as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty so that covetousness and displeasure, evil unwholesome states, might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained. He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the mind-faculty.<sup>264</sup>

Possessing this noble restraint over the sense-faculties, he experiences within himself a joy that is blameless.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is how a monk guards the sense-doors.

### Mindfulness and clear knowledge<sup>265</sup>

[D 2.65] And how, Ambaṭṭha, is a monk possessed of mindfulness and clear knowledge?

Here, Ambaṭṭha, when going forward and returning, he acts with clear knowledge:

- (1) while going forward or back, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (2) while looking forward or back, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (3) while bending or stretching, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (4) while carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (5) while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, he is clearly knowing of what he is doing;
- (6) while voiding or peeing, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (7) while walking, while standing, while sitting, while asleep, while awake,<sup>266</sup> while talking, or while remaining silent, he is clearly aware of what he is doing.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is how [D 1:71] a monk is possessed of mindfulness and clear knowledge.

### Contentment

[D 2.66] And how is a monk content?

Here, Ambaṭṭha, he is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these with him.

Here, just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is how a monk is content.

### Abandoning the mental hindrances

[D 2.67] Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, this aggregate of noble sense-restraint, this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this aggregate of noble contentment, he resorts to

gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

<sup>264</sup> D 2.64/1:70, 10.2.2/1:207, 33.1.11(10)/3:225; M 27.15/1:180, 33.20/1:223, 38.35/1:269, 51.16/1:346, 53.8/-1:355, 94.18/2:162, 101.33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (×4), 4.198.11/2:210, 5.76.12/3:99 f, 5.140.11/3:163, 10.99.6/5:206, 11.18.23/5:351. For a study, see SD 9.14.

<sup>265</sup> *Sati, sampajañña* = *sati*, “mindfulness,” *sampajañña*, “clear knowledge.” In *Satipaṭṭhānas Ss*, however, this section is “clear knowledge” (*sampajañña*); “mindfulness” (*sati*). See SD 13 (3.6abc).

<sup>266</sup> “When asleep, when awake” *sutte jāgarite*. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, sleeping.” See Intro (3.6c).



a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gully [gorge], a hillside cave, a cemetery, a remote forest [jungle grove], the open air, a heap of straw.<sup>267</sup>

Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, keeps his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.<sup>268</sup>

[D 2.68] (1) Abandoning **covetousness** with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning **restlessness and worry**, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and worry.

(5) Abandoning **spiritual doubt**, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

### Similes for the hindrances

[D 2.69] (1) Suppose, Ambaṭṭha, that a man, taking a loan, invests it in his businesses. His businesses succeed. He repays his old debts and there is a surplus for maintaining his wife. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, taking a loan, I invested it in my businesses. [D 1:72] Now my businesses have succeeded. I have repaid my old debts and there is a surplus for maintaining my wife.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.70] (2) Suppose, Ambaṭṭha, that a man falls sick, in pain and seriously ill. He does not enjoy his meals, and there is no strength in his body. As time passes, he recovers from that sickness. He enjoys his meals and there is strength in his body. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was sick. Now, I have recovered from that sickness. I enjoy my meals and there is strength in my body.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.71] (3) Suppose, Ambaṭṭha, that a man is bound in prison. As time passes, he eventually is released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was bound in prison. Now, I am released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.72] (4) Suppose, Ambaṭṭha, that a man is a slave, subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes. As time passes, he eventually is released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, free, able to go where he likes. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was a slave... Now I am released from that slavery, subject to myself, not subject to others, freed, able to go where I like.’ [D 1:73] Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.73] (5) Suppose, Ambaṭṭha, that a man, carrying money and goods, is journeying on a road through the wilderness. As time passes, he eventually emerges from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,

<sup>267</sup> So *iminā ca ariyena sīla-k,khandhena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena indriya,samvarena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena sati,sampajaññaena samannāgato imāya ca ariyāya santuṭṭhitāya samannāgato vivittam senāsanam bhajati, araññaṃ rukkhā,mūlam pabbatam kandaram giri,guham susānam vana,pattham abbhokāsam palāla,puñjam*. This stock phrase of 9 places conducive to meditation are found at D 1:72, 207, 2:242, 3:49; M 1:181, 269, 274, 346, 440, 441, 2:162, 226, 3:3, 35, 115-117; A 2:210, 3:92, 100, 4:436, 5:207; Nm 1:26, 140, 2:341; Miln 369. A shorter list, probably later, is mentioned in **Anāpāna,sati S** (M 118): “Here, monks, a monk who has gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down, and having crossed his legs and keeping his body upright, establishes mindfulness before him.” (M 118,17/3:82).

<sup>268</sup> Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in the Vibhaṅga: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh ¶537/252). NṬ: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha,nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

‘Before, carrying money and goods, I was journeying on a road through the wilderness. Now I have emerged from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.74] In the same way, Ambaṭṭha, when these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a journey on a road through the wilderness.<sup>269</sup>

### Resultant joy and peace

[D 2.75.1] When he is aware that these five hindrances are abandoned in him, he regards it as solvency, good health, release from prison, emancipation, a place of security.

Seeing that they have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. For one who is glad, zest arises. For one whose mind zestful, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body becomes happy. For one who is happy, the mind concentrates.<sup>270</sup>

## THE 4 DHYANAS

THE 1<sup>ST</sup> DHYANA. [D 2.75.2]

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states,  
he attains and dwells in **the first dhyana**,

accompanied by initial application and sustained application,

accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.<sup>271</sup>

He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body<sup>272</sup> with the zest and happiness born of solitude.<sup>273</sup> [D 1:74]

[D 2.76] Ambaṭṭha, just as if a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath lather—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would not drip;

even so, the monk permeates this very body with the zest and happiness born of solitude. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of solitude.

This, too, is a part of his conduct.<sup>274</sup>

THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DHYANA. [D 2.77] And, furthermore, Ambaṭṭha,

with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,

<sup>269</sup> MA 2:318-321 explains this section in some detail: see Appendix to **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39) tr in Sutta Discovery, 2004.

<sup>270</sup> *Tass’ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīṇe attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati. Pītimanassa kāyo passambhati. Passaddha,kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati.* This important stock passage is found throughout the Nikāyas: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.76/1:73), **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.10a/1:182), **(Ānanda) Subha S** (D 10.2.21/1:207), **Kevalāḍḍha S** (D 11.44/1:214), **Tevijja S** (D 13/1:250), **Saṅgīti S** (D 33/3:241, 243), **Das’uttara S** (D 34/3:279 (×5); **Vatthūpama S** (M 7/1:38 (×3), **Cūla Assa,pura S** (M 40.8/1:283); **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118/3:86 (×2), 87 (×2)); **Pamāda,vihārī S** (S 35.97/4:78 (×2), 79 (×2)); **Pāṭaliya S** (S 42.13/4:352 (×2), 353-358); **Sīla S** (S 46.3/5:69 (×2)), **Upakkilesa S** (S 46.33/5:92), **Anupakkilesa S** (S 46.34/5:93 (×2)), **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 5:156 (×2)), **Ānanda S** (S 54.13/5:332 (×2), *sambojjhaṅga*), **Bhikkhū S** (S 54.16/5:339 (×2), *sambojjhaṅga*), **Nandiya S** (S 55.40/5:398 (×3), 399); **Parisa S** (A 3.93/1:243), **Ājāniya S** (A 3.94/1:244), **Jāta,rūpa S** (A 3.100/1:254, 257, 258); **Vimuttāyatana S** (A 5.26/3:21, 22 (×2), 23 (×2)); **(Agata,phala) Mahānāma S** (A 6.10/3:285 (×2), 286, 287 (×2), 288); **(Dasaka) Cetanā,karaṇīya S** (A 10.2/5:3); **(Eka,dasaka) Cetanā,karaṇīya S** (A 11.2/-5:312), **Paṭhama Mahānāma S** (A 11.12/5:329, 330 (×2), 331 (×2), 332), **Dutiya Mahānāma S** (A 11.13/5:334).

<sup>271</sup> On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see “The layman and dhyana,” SD 8.5.

<sup>272</sup> Here “body” (*kāya*) refers to the “mental body” (*nāma,kāya*), ie feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*) (Vism 4.175/169).

<sup>273</sup> These are the dhyana factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhasa ek’aggatā*, respectively.

<sup>274</sup> *Idam pi’ssa hoti caraṇasmim.*

by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,  
 he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**,  
 free from initial application and sustained application,  
 accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.<sup>275</sup>

He permeates and pervades, [D 1:75] suffuses and fills this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration.

[D 2.78] Ambaṭṭha, just as a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having *no* inflow from the east, *no* inflow from the west, *no* inflow from the north, or *no* inflow from the south, and with the skies *not* bringing heavy rain over and again.<sup>276</sup> Yet the cool spring welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, flood and fill it with cool waters—there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters;

even so, the monk permeates this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of concentration.

This, too, is a part of his conduct.

THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DHYANA. [D 2.79] And furthermore, Ambaṭṭha,  
with the fading away of zest,

he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing,  
 and experiences happiness with the body.

He attains and dwells in **the third dhyana**,  
 of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

[D 2.80] Ambaṭṭha, just as in a pond of the blue lotuses, red and white lotuses, or red lotuses,<sup>277</sup> born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated, pervaded, suffused and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water;

even so, the monk permeates this very body with the happiness free from zest, so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with this happiness free from zest.

This, too, is a part of his conduct.

THE 4<sup>TH</sup> DHYANA. [D 2.81] (4) And furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,<sup>278</sup> and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>279</sup>

<sup>275</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:-273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

<sup>276</sup> Be Ee *devo ca na kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya. Ce devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ nānupaveccheyya*. Se omits *na: devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya*. See D 1:74 n6. For preferring the *na* reading, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (8.2).

<sup>277</sup> *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (*padma*) and *puṇḍarīka* respectively. This simile also found in **Kāya, gatā, sati S** (M 119.20/3:93 f). See **Āyācana S** (S 6.12/1:138) where the simile of lotuses in a pond is applied to beings of different spiritual dispositions.

<sup>278</sup> “Joy...pain,” *sukha...dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa...somanassa*—refers to *mental* feelings, transcended earlier. Mental feelings must be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall’atthena S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

<sup>279</sup> Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See also **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.83/1:75), SD 8.10 & **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

He sits, pervading the body with a pure, bright mind,<sup>280</sup> so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by a pure, bright mind.

[D 2.82] Ambaṭṭha, just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth, [D 1:76] so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend;

even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright mind. There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by pure, bright mind.

This, too, is a part of his conduct.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is that conduct.<sup>281</sup>

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENT IN KNOWLEDGE

(*Vijjā,sampadā*)

#### Insight knowledge

[D 2.83]<sup>282</sup> With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects,<sup>283</sup> pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable, he directs and inclines it to **knowledge and vision**.

He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is form composed of the four great elements,<sup>284</sup> born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion.<sup>285</sup> And this consciousness of mine lies attached here, bound up here.’<sup>286</sup>

[D 2.84] Ambaṭṭha, just as if there were a beautiful beryl<sup>287</sup> gem of the purest water—eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects, through which runs a blue, or yellow, or red, or white thread, or brown thread<sup>288</sup>—and a man with good eyesight, taking it in his hand, were to reflect on it thus:

<sup>280</sup> See **Accharā Vagga** (A 1.6.1-2): “Monks, this mind is radiant (*pabhassara*), but it is defiled by defilements from outside. The untutored ordinary person does not understand this as it really is. As such, for him there is no personal development.” (A 1:10). On reaching the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, the practitioner becomes directly aware of the truly and naturally pure nature of the mind. See also A:NB 1999 §4.

<sup>281</sup> *Idaṃ kho taṃ Ambaṭṭha caraṇaṃ*. This concludes the section on “conduct” (*carāṇa*) that begins at [D 2.63].

<sup>282</sup> This and foll passage = (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10.2.21-22/1:209).

<sup>283</sup> *upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

<sup>284</sup> The 4 great (or primary): earth (*mahā,bhūtā*), water, fire, wind (D 1:214; Vism 11.27; Abhs 154).

<sup>285</sup> See **Vammika S** (M 23.4/1:144) for parable of the anthill (representing the body).

<sup>286</sup> This statement means that consciousness here (in a physical being) is dependent on the physical body. RD points out that this and other passages disprove the idea that the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) transmigrates. For holding such a view, Sāti was severely rebuked by the Buddha (M 38). A new re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi*) arises at conception, dependent on the old one (see Vism 17.164 ff).

<sup>287</sup> *Veluriya*: from a metathesis of *veruliya* comes Greek *beryllos* “beryl,” whence German *Brille* “spectacles” (originally of beryl). (Walshe)

<sup>288</sup> “Through which runs... etc,” *tatra suttam āvutaṃ nīlam vā pītam vā lohitaṃ vā odātam vā paṇḍu,suttam vā*. Rhys Davids tr *pīta* here as “orange-coloured,” and *paṇḍu* as “yellow” (D:RD 1:87), while Bodhi has as “yellow” and “brown” respectively (1989:44). *Paṇḍu,sutta* is found in **Vidhura Paṇḍita J** (J 545/6:305), where EB Cowell & WHD Rouse tr it as “white thread” (J:C&R 6:147). Both *pīta* and *paṇḍu* sometimes refer to “yellow.” SED def *pāṇḍu* as “yellowish white, white, pale.” Comys offer no explanation, except that the gem “is like the physical body, and the thread running through it is like insight knowledge (*vipassanā,viññāṇa*)” (DA 1:211). DANT (New Subcomy) corrects “insight knowledge” to “insight consciousness” (*vipassanā,viññāṇa*, DANT :VRI 2:126). **Jothiko**: “Generally, ‘knowledge and vision’ is the ability, the state of clarity, enabling one to see even hidden things clearly. So the image of a transparent gem. It is both ‘higher than Jhāna’, if the absorptions are taken as ‘pleasant abiding in the here and now.’ And ‘less than the absorptions’ if they are used as a way of reaching full enlightenment. So, obviously, it is not the *sammā nāṇa*—knowledge of liberation. The colors at old were often associated with natural phenomena. *Paṇḍu* is earthen colors, the word used even today to denote the dyeing of robes: various natural hues of brown, mostly. Just as *lohita* is both ‘blood’ and the color of ‘red,’ *pitta* [*pīta*] is ‘bile’ and its shades, mostly

‘This is a beautiful beryl gem of the purest water—eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects, through which runs a blue, or yellow, or red, or white, or brown thread.’

Even so, Ambaṭṭha —with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and utterly unshakable—he directs and inclines it to knowledge and vision.

He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is form, composed of the four great elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to uncertainty, rubbing, pressing, breaking up and destruction. **[D 1:77]** And this consciousness of mine lies attached here, bound up here.’<sup>289</sup>

This is a part of his knowledge.<sup>290</sup>

### Knowledge of the mind-made body

**[D 2.85]** With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable, he directs and inclines it to creating a **mind-made body**.<sup>291</sup> From this body he creates another body, endowed with form,<sup>292</sup> mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

**[D 2.86]** Ambaṭṭha, just as if a man were to draw a reed from its sheath, the thought would occur to him:

‘This is the sheath, this is the reed. The sheath is one thing, the reed another, but the reed has been drawn out from the sheath.’

Or, Ambaṭṭha, as if a man were to draw a sword from its scabbard. The thought would occur to him:

‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.’

Or, Ambaṭṭha, as if a man were to pull a snake out from its slough. The thought would occur to him: ‘This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake is one thing, the slough another, but the snake has been pulled out from the slough’;

Even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, from this body he creates another body, endowed with form, mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

This is a part of his knowledge.

‘light green,’ off yellow.’ (email 13 Nov 2006). It is possible that the six colours represent the six sense-consciousnesses. The first 4 colours are those of the colour *kaṣiṇa* meditations: see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.29-32/2:110 f), SD 9. See **Viññāṇa**, SD 17.8a (4.1).

<sup>289</sup> This statement means that consciousness here (in a physical being) is dependent on the physical body.

<sup>290</sup> *Idam pi'ssa hoti vijjāya*.

<sup>291</sup> “Mind-made body,” *mano, mayā kāya*. Peter Harvey: “This shows that consciousness is seen as able to leave the physical body by means of a mind-made body. Such a body could be seen as a kind of ‘subtle body,’ for a being with a mind-made body is said to feed on joy (D 1:17), not on solid nutriment (D 1:195): it thus lacks the four great elements of the physical body (solidity, cohesion, heat and motion, D 1:195). As such a body relates to the ‘realm of (pure) form,’ the subtle matter composing it can only be visible and audible matter (Vbh 405). However, the mind-made body is invisible to the normal eye (Pm 2:209). It occupies space, but does not impinge on gross physical matter, for the ‘selfhood’ of a certain god with a mind-made body is said to be as large as two or three fields, but to cause no harm to anyone (A 3:122). With such a body, a person can exercise psychic powers such as going through solid objects, being in many places at once, or flying (D 1:78).” (1993:8 digital ed)

<sup>292</sup> Exactly the same as the physical body (but mentally created). This mind-made body is what is mistaken for a soul or self.

## KNOWLEDGE OF THE MODES OF SUPERNORMAL POWER

*Mundane superknowledge [§89-98]*

**(1) PSYCHIC POWER.** [D 2.87] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects,<sup>293</sup> pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable, he directs and inclines it to [D 1:78] the manifold psychic power.<sup>294</sup>

1. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
2. He appears, and vanishes.
3. He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.
4. He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.
5. He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.
6. Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.
7. With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty and powerful is he.
8. He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā worlds.

[D 2.88] Ambaṭṭha, just as a skilled potter or his assistant could craft from well-prepared clay whatever kind of pottery vessel he likes, or, Ambaṭṭha, as a skilled ivory-carver or his assistant could craft from well-prepared ivory any kind of ivory-work he likes, or, Ambaṭṭha, as a skilled goldsmith or his assistant could craft from well-prepared gold any kind of gold article he likes—even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā worlds. [D 1:79]

### **(2) CLAIRAUDIENCE (DIVINE EAR).**

[D 2.89] With his mind thus *concentrated*, he hears, by means of the divine-ear element,<sup>295</sup> purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

[D 2.90] Ambaṭṭha, just as if a man travelling along a highway were to hear the sounds of bheri [conical drum], mridanga [tom-tom],<sup>296</sup> conch-shell, cymbals, and dindima [small drum], he would know, ‘That is bheri sound; that is mridanga sound; that is conch sound; that is cymbal sound; that is dindima sound’—even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he hears, by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

This is a part of his knowledge.

**(3) MIND-READING.** [D 2.91] With his mind thus *concentrated*, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of mind-reading. He knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.<sup>297</sup>

*He knows a mind with lust as a mind with lust,  
and a mind without lust as a mind without lust. [D 1:80]*

*He knows a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,  
and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.*

*He knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,  
and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.*

*He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,  
and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and worry] as a distracted mind.*

*He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind,  
and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.*

<sup>293</sup> *upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

<sup>294</sup> *Iddhi, vidhā*. Cf **Kevalāḍḍha S** (D 11) where the Buddha disapproves of exhibiting such powers (D 11.4-5/1:213 f), SD 1.7.

<sup>295</sup> “Divine-ear element,” *dibba, sota, dhātu*, clairaudience.

<sup>296</sup> “Mridanga,” *mutiṅgā*, vl *mudiṅgā* (V 1:15, S 2:267). See **Āṇi S** (S 20.7.2) tr n in Sutta Discovery, 2004.

<sup>297</sup> The following section (italicized) is a list of mental states is apparently taken from **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22.12/-2:299 = M 10.34/1:59), where it fits more appropriately. (Walshe, D:W 546 n131). On another def of mind-reading (4 kinds), see **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28.6/3:103 f), SD 14.10.

*He knows a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind,  
and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind<sup>298</sup>.  
He knows a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind,  
and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.  
He knows a liberated mind as a liberated mind,  
and an unliberated mind as an unliberated mind.*

[D 2.92] Ambaṭṭha, just as if a young man or woman, fond of ornaments, examining the reflection of his or her own face in a bright mirror or a bowl of clear water would know ‘blemished’ if it were blemished, or ‘unblemished’ if it were not—even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind. He knows a mind with lust... without lust;... with aversion... without aversion; ... with delusion... without delusion; a contracted mind, a distracted mind; an exalted mind, an unexalted mind; a surpassable mind, an unsurpassable mind; a concentrated mind, an unconcentrated mind; a liberated mind, an unliberated mind—he *knows each of them just as it is*. [D 1:81]

This is a part of his knowledge.

**(4) THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE RECOLLECTION OF PAST LIVES.** [D 2.93] With his mind thus *concentrated*, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.<sup>299</sup> He recollects manifold past existence, that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus, Ambaṭṭha, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.<sup>300</sup>

[D 2.94] PARABLE OF THE TRAVELLER. Just as if a man were to go from his home village to another village, and then from that village to yet another village, and then from that village back to his home village. The thought would occur to him,

‘I went from my home village to that village over there. There I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way. From that village I went to that village over there, and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way. From that village I came back home’;<sup>301</sup> [D 1:82]

Even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he recollects his manifold past lives...in their modes and details.

This is a part of his knowledge.

**(5) THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE REBIRTH OF BEINGS (THE DIVINE EYE).** [D 2.95] With his mind thus *concentrated*, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings.<sup>302</sup> He sees—by means of the divine eye [clairvoyance],<sup>303</sup> purified and surpassing the human—be-

<sup>298</sup> Unsurpassable (*anuttaram*) mind, probably synonymous with “developed” mind. See D:W 592 n667.

<sup>299</sup> *Pubbe, nivāsanānussati. ñāṇa*, lit “the knowledge of the recollection of past abidings [existences].” The remainder of this is expanded into 4 sections in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1, 1.31-34/1:13-16 @ SD 25.3(76.3)) and 3 sections in **Sampasādaniya S** (D 27, 15-17/3:107-112 @ SD 10.12). In both cases, each explains how the eternalist view arose.

<sup>300</sup> This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

<sup>301</sup> The 3 villages are the world of sense-desire, the form world, and the formless world (DA).

<sup>302</sup> *Cutūpapāta ñāṇa*, “the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth (of beings),” or “knowledge of rebirth according to karma” (*yathā, kammūpaga ñāṇa*), or “the divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*): see foll n.

ings passing away and re-arising, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in the heavens, in the suffering states, faring in accordance with their karma:

‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up, have re-arisen in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.

But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

Thus, Ambaṭṭha, by means of the divine eye, [D 1:83] he sees beings passing away and re-arising, and *how they fare according to* their karma.

[D 2.96] PARABLE OF THE CITY SQUARE.<sup>304</sup> Ambaṭṭha, just as if there were a mansion in the central square [where four roads meet], and a man with good eyesight standing on top of it were to see people entering a house, leaving it, wandering along the carriage-road, and sitting down in the central square [where four roads meet]. The thought would occur to him,

‘These people are entering a house, leaving it, walking along the streets, and sitting down in the central square [where four roads meet].’<sup>305</sup>

Even so, Ambaṭṭha, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he sees by means of the divine eye, how beings *fare in accordance* with their karma.

This is a part of his knowledge.

## (C) TRAINING IN WISDOM

(*Paññā, sikkhā*)

**(6) THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF MENTAL INFLUXES.** [D 2.97] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable, the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes.<sup>306</sup>

He know according to reality, “This is suffering (*dukkha*).”

He know according to reality, “This is the arising of suffering.”

He know according to reality, “This is the ending of suffering.”

He know according to reality, “This is the path to the ending of suffering.”<sup>307</sup>

<sup>303</sup> *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (see n in §104). On the relationship of this knowledge to the 62 grounds for wrong views, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.3(76.3). See pre c.

<sup>304</sup> On this parable, see also SD 2.17(8).

<sup>305</sup> On the significance of this simile in confirming canonical acceptance of the intermediate state (*antarā, bhava*), see “**Is Rebirth Immediate?**” SD 2.17.8.

<sup>306</sup> *Āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kāma-āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence or becoming (*bhav-āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh-āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjā-āsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of three influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict under *āsava*.

<sup>307</sup> These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called “noble truths” here (nor in **Ariya, pariyesanā S**, M 26.43). Norman remarks that these four statements, which also likewise appear in **Mahā Saccaka S** (M36.42/1:249), but are not referred to as the noble truths about suffering, “and since they appear to be subordinate to the four statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition [here], which led to a parallel, but inappropriate, set of four statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to pro-



He know according to reality, “These are mental influxes (*āsava*).”  
 He know according to reality, “This is the arising of influxes.”  
 He know according to reality, “This is the ending of influxes.”  
 He know according to reality, “This is the path to the ending of influxes.”<sup>308</sup>

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from  
 the influx of sensual desire,  
 the influx of existence,  
 the influx of ignorance.

With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Liberated (am I)!’ He knows that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this.’<sup>309</sup>

[D 2.98] Ambaṭṭha, just as if there were a pool of water in a mountain glen, clear, limpid, unsullied,<sup>310</sup> where, a person with good eyes, from its edge, would see shellfish and shells, or gravel and pebbles, or shoals of fish moving about or resting in it,<sup>311</sup> and it would occur to him,

‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting’—even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and utterly unshakable, the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the mental influxes, *and in due course is liberated*.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is that knowledge.<sup>312</sup> [See D 2.39]

This monk, Ambaṭṭha, is called “**accomplished in knowledge,**” or “**accomplished in conduct,**” or “**accomplished in knowledge and conduct.**”

And, Ambaṭṭha, there is no accomplishment of knowledge and accomplishment of conduct that are higher or more sublime than these accomplishment of knowledge and accomplishment of conduct.

## THE BRAHMINS EXPOSED

### The 4 sources of loss

**2.3** Now, Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct [101] there are the 4 sources of loss.<sup>313</sup>

What are the four?

(1) Here, Ambaṭṭha, a certain ascetic or brahmin, without fully realizing<sup>314</sup> this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct, bearing his pole and khari,<sup>315</sup> plunges into the depths of the forest,<sup>316</sup> thinking:

vide a symmetry” (Norman 1990:26). For a discussion on the formulation of the noble truths, see Norman 1982:377-91 & also Schmithausen 1981:205.

<sup>308</sup> As in **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26,42), SD 1. On the application of the four noble truth template to both *dukkha* and to *āsava* here, see Analayo 2003:224 n28 + SD 17.4 (8.4)

<sup>309</sup> *Nāparaṃ itthatāya*: lit. “there is no more of ‘thusness.’” See **Mahā,nidāna S** (M 15,22), SD 5.17.

<sup>310</sup> “Clear, limpid, unsullied,” *accho vipassanno anāvilo*.

<sup>311</sup> *Udaka,rahado accho vipassanno anāvilo tattha cakkhumā puriso tīre thito passeyya sippi,sambukam pi sakkhara,kaṭhalam pi maccha,gumbam pi carantam pi tiṭṭhantam pi*. This whole section also in **Paṇihita Acchanna Vagga** (A 1.5.5-6) in the same context, differently worded.

<sup>312</sup> This and the foll para concludes the “knowledge” (*vijjā*) section that begins at [D 2.83]. All the preceding “fruits” lead up to this, which alone, as RD points out is exclusively Buddhist.

<sup>313</sup> *Cattāri apāya,mukhāni*. Comy: *vināsa,mukhāni*, “sources of destruction” (DA 1:269 = S 943); A 2:166,16 (= *apāya,vāhanaka-c,chiddāni*, “uncertainties leading to destruction,” AA 3:155); A 4:283,14 (= *vināsassa thānāni*, “bases for destruction,” AA 4:138) = 287,21; opp *āya,mukha* (cf D 1:74,21); cf AA 3:156 f. Cf *cha bhogānam* ~, “six sources of destruction of wealth” (D 3:181,20, 182,21).

<sup>314</sup> “Without fully realizing,” **anabhisambhuṇamāno** [ppr med of *na + abhi,sam + bhūṇāti* (near-syn of *pāpuṇā-ti*)] not obtaining or mastering, not being able to keep up with (D 1:101 = *asampāpuṇanto avisahamāno vā*, DA 1:268). CPD defs *an-abhisambhunana* (qv) as “the not being able to comprehend”; but see under *abhisambhavati* (2): *abhi-sambhuṇāti*. DP defs *abhisambhavati* (= *abhisambhoti, abhisambhuṇāti*) as “reaches, attains; is able, cap-

‘I will live on available fruits as food.’<sup>317</sup>

But it turns out that he was only capable of being an attendant (*paricāraka*) to the one who has attained peerless knowledge and conduct.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is the first source of loss that occurs with regards to the attainment of peerless knowledge and conduct.

(2) And furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here, a certain ascetic or brahmin, without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct,

and without fully realizing the practice of living on available fruits,  
taking a hoe and a basket,<sup>318</sup> plunges into a forest wilderness,<sup>319</sup> thinking:

‘I will live on bulbs, roots and fruits.’<sup>320</sup>

But it turns out that he was only capable of being an attendant to the one who has attained peerless knowledge and conduct.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is the second source of loss that occurs with regards to the attainment of peerless knowledge and conduct.

(3) And furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here, a certain ascetic or brahmin, without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct,

and without fully realizing the practice of living on available fruits,  
and without fully realizing the practice of living on bulbs, roots and fruits,

builds himself a fire shrine on the fringe of a village or a market town, and there dwells, attending to the fire god [Agni].<sup>321</sup>

But it turns out that he was only capable of being an attendant to the one who has attained peerless knowledge and conduct.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is the third source of loss that occurs with regards to the attainment of peerless knowledge and conduct.

(4) And furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here, a certain ascetic or brahmin, without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct,

and without fully realizing the practice of living on available fruits,  
and without fully realizing the practice of living on bulbs, roots and fruits,  
and without fully realizing the practice of attending to a fire shrine, **[102]** he builds himself a four-door almshouse at a crossroads [where four highways meet], and dwells there, thinking:

‘Whosoever, whether recluse or brahmin, shall come here, from any of these four quarters, I shall honour him according to my ability and according to my power.’

But it turns out that he was only capable of being an attendant to the one who has attained peerless knowledge and conduct.

able (of); is adequate; masters; endures, bears.” Cf *an-abhisambhuṇanto* (Nm 76 = ~ *vā ti asampāpuṇanto vā asak-konto vā*, “~ means not attaining, not being able to,” NmA). The sense is that of neither fully attaining it, nor fully comprehending it.

<sup>315</sup> *Khāri, vidham ādāya*. A *khāri* is a measure of grain (= 4 *māṇikā* or 16 *doṇa*), which is the capacity of the container an ascetic (*tāpasa*) uses to store his requisites, and borne on carrying pole or pingo (*kāja*) (V 1:33; J 6:500; Ap 365) or *vidha* (D 1:101; S 3.11/1:78; U 65; J 3:116, 5:204, 207; SA 1:148). Amongst the ascetic’s requisites are fire-sticks, a water-pot (*kamaṇḍalu*), and needles.

<sup>316</sup> “Into the depths of the forest,” *āraññāyatanam*, only here: cf below.

<sup>317</sup> *Pavatta, phala, bhojano bhavissāmī ti*. Comy glosses *pavatta, phala* as *patita, phala*, “fruits that have fallen” (DA 1:269).

<sup>318</sup> *Kudāla, piṭakam ādāya*.

<sup>319</sup> “A forest wilderness,” Be Se *ārañña, vanam*; Ce *āraññāyatanam*; Ee *āraññe vanam*.

<sup>320</sup> *Kanda, mūla, phala, bhojano bhavissāmī ti*.

<sup>321</sup> *Gāma, sāmantaṃ vā nigama, sāmantaṃ vā agyāgāram karitvā aggim parcaranto acchati*. See **Asāta, manta J** (J 61/1:285), **Naṅguṭṭha J** (J 144/1:494), **Santhava J** (J 162/2:43). The “great moralities” (*mahā, sīla*) prohibit performing the “fire offering” or fire puja (*aggi, homa*) (D 1.21/1:9), found in all the first 13 Dīgha suttas. See [D 1.21] above. It is interesting that the Tibetans still perform such a puja.

This, Ambaṭṭha, is the fourth source of loss that occurs with regards to the attainment of peerless knowledge and conduct.

**2.4** What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, do you live with your teacher in conformity with this peerless accomplishment of knowledge and conduct?”

“No, master Gotama. And who, master Gotama, am I, along with my teacher, compared to the peerless accomplishment of knowledge and conduct?<sup>322</sup> Far am I, master Gotama, along with my teacher, from the peerless accomplishment of knowledge and conduct.”

(1) “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Even without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct, have you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, bearing the pole and khari, plunged into the depths of the forest, thinking, ‘I will live on available fruits as food’?”

“No, master Gotama.”

(2) “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Even without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct, have you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, lived on available fruits as food, and lived on bulbs, roots and fruits?”

“No, master Gotama.”

(3) “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Even without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct, have you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, lived on available fruits as food, and lived on bulbs, roots and fruits, and built a fire shrine on the fringe of a village or a market town, and there dwelt, attending to the fire god [Agni]?” [103]

“No, master Gotama.”

(4) “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Even without fully realizing this peerless attainment of knowledge and conduct, have you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, lived on available fruits as food, and lived on bulbs, roots and fruits, and dwelt attending to the fire god [Agni], and built a four-door alms-house at a crossroads [where four highways meet], and dwelt there, thinking, ‘Whosoever, whether recluse or brahmin, shall come here, from any of these four quarters, we shall honour him according to our ability and according to our power.’?”

“No, master Gotama.”

**2.5** “So, you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, are wanting in regards to the peerless accomplishment of knowledge and conduct!

You, along with your teacher, are wanting in regards to the peerless accomplishment of knowledge and conduct on account of the 4 sources of loss!

And these words, Ambaṭṭha—‘Shavelings, little ascetics, menials, blacks, born of the feet of our Kinsman (Mahā Brahmā),<sup>323</sup> that they should hold a conversation with the brahmins of the Three Vedas!’—have been spoken by your teacher, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti: thus, he himself, being imperfect, is at a loss, too!<sup>324</sup>

See, Ambaṭṭha, the extent of the failure of your teacher, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, in this matter!

### The position of the kshatriyas

**2.6** PASENADI DESPISES THE BRAHMINS. And, Ambaṭṭha, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, governs a gift<sup>325</sup> from the rajah Pasenadi of Kosala. But the rajah Pasenadi of Kosala does not grant him a personal audience. For, when he consults him, he does so from behind a curtain. How is it, Ambaṭṭha, that the rajah

<sup>322</sup> *Kocāham, bho Gotama, sâcariyako, kâ ca anuttarâ vijjâ, caraṇa.sampadâ?*

<sup>323</sup> §1.10b.

<sup>324</sup> “He himself... is at a loss, too,” *attanā āpāyiko pi aparipūramāno*. Here *āpāyika*, instead of the usu meaning of “of the *apāya* (state of misery), hellish state,” has a non-technical sense.

<sup>325</sup> “Governs a gift” (*dattikam bhujjati*), where *dattika* means “that which is given,” an abstract n, here clearly alluding to the brahmadeya (fief) of Ukkatthā [1.2]; cf “grant” (D:RD 1:128,16). *Bhujjati*, usu tr as “he enjoys,” here has the sense of “governs,” as at M 98.10(26)/2:196 = Sn 619.

Pasenadi of Kosala, from whom he would accept alms justly presented, does not grant him a personal audience?<sup>326</sup>

See, Ambaṭṭha, the extent of the failure of your teacher, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, in this matter!<sup>327</sup>

**2.7** SPEECH DOES NOT MAKE THE MAN. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose here the rajah Pasenadi of Kosala, seated on an elephant's neck, or seated on horseback, or standing on the foot-rug of his chariot, were to consult with high nobles or royal princes on some matter. **[104]**

And if he were to leave that spot and stand at one side, and then a shudra or a shudra slave were to come up and, standing there, were to consult him, saying, 'Such and such says rajah Pasenadi of Kosala; such and such says rajah Pasenadi of Kosala.'

Although he might have spoken as the rajah might himself might have done, or consulted as the rajah himself might have done, would he thereby be the rajah or a royal minister?"

"No, master Gotama."

## The ancient rishis

**2.8.1** Even so, Ambaṭṭha, what about the ancient rishis [sages] of the brahmins, mantra makers, mantra preachers—that is to say, Aṣṭaka, Vāmaka, Vāma,deva, Viśvā,mitra, Jamad-agni, Aṅgi,rasa, Bhāra,dvāja, Vāsiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, and Bhagu<sup>328</sup>—whose ancient mantras and verses are chanted, uttered and collected by the brahmins of today, who sing them and recite them, and having sung them make others sing them, having recited them make others recite them?<sup>329</sup>

**2.8.2** You say, 'I, along with my teacher, know by heart their mantras,' but on that very account you are not yourself a rishi, nor do you know the state of a rishi, nor do you practise for the sake of rishihood!

**2.9.1** Even so, Ambaṭṭha, what about the ancient rishis of the brahmins, mantra makers, mantra preachers—that is to say, Aṣṭaka, Vāmaka, Vāma,deva, Viśvā,mitra, Jamad-agni, Aṅgi,rasa, Bhāra,dvāja, Vāsiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, and Bhagu—whose ancient mantras and verses are chanted, uttered and collected by the brahmins of today, who sing them and recite them, and having sung them make others sing them, having recited them make others recite them?

**2.9.2** Did they (those ancient rishis) find pleasure in being well-bathed, well-perfumed, with hair and beard trimmed, decked in jewelled ear-rings and ornaments, dressed in white garments, endowed with and enjoying the five cords of sensual pleasures—like what you, along with your teacher, are doing now?<sup>330</sup>

**[105]** "No, master Gotama."<sup>331</sup>

**2.10.1** Did they consume boiled sali rice,<sup>332</sup> free of black specks, with pure meat, curries and garnishings, with various curries, various sauces, such as you, along with your teacher, do now?<sup>333</sup>

<sup>326</sup> This passage suggests how Pasenadi, a kshatriya, holds himself as being *above* a brahmin (Pokkhara,sāti): see DA 1:271 f. See **Sonaka J** (J 529), where a king calls a brahmin "low-born" (*hīna,jacca*) (J 529/5:257); cf T W Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 1903:60. See foll n.

<sup>327</sup> Should a teacher know such a truth but conceal it, he would not be worth his salt. Thus, in **Sonaka J** (J 529), a rajah, on this account, calls a brahmin "low born" (*hīna,jacca*) compared to himself (J 529/5:257). See prec n.

<sup>328</sup> See **Tevijja S** (D 13/1:235-252), SD 1.8 (2.1). For identification of these seers' names, see *Vinaya Texts* (tr Rhys Davids & Oldenberg) 2:130 n3 & V:H 4:337 nn5-9.

<sup>329</sup> "The ancient seers...make others recite them,"...[tevijjānam]\* *brāhmaṇānam pubbakā isayo mantānam kattāro mantānam pavattāro, yesam idam etarahi brāhmaṇā porāṇam manta,padam gītānam pavuttam samhitam, tad anugāyanti tad anubhāsanti, bhāsitam anubhāsanti vācitam anuvācenti, seyyath'idam—Atthako Vāmako Vāma,devo Vessā,mitto Yama-t-aggi [Ke Yama-d-aggi] Aṅgīraso Bhāra,dvājo Vāsettho Kassapo Bhagu [\* only at D 13.13]: this is stock: Mv 35.2 = V 1:245; **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.2.8/1:104); **Tevijja S** (D 13.2.13/1:238 f, 13.2.18/1:241, 242, 243); **Caṅkī S** (M 95.13/2:169 f), (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99.9/2:200); **Doṇa S** (A 5.192/3:223 f, 3:229 f), (**Sāriputta**) **Dāna S** (A 7.49/4:61). See Intro (5).*

<sup>330</sup> Se: *Evam su te sunhātā suvilittā kappita,kesa,massū āmutta,maṇi,kuṇḍal'ābharaṇā* [Ee Ce, āmutta,mālā-bharaṇā, "decked in garlands and ornaments"] *odāta,vattha,vasanā pañcahi kāma,guṇehi samappitā samaṅgī,bhūtā paricārentī, seyyathāpi tvam etarahi sācariyako ti?* Be āmukka- for āmutta is prob wr. See Intro (5).

<sup>331</sup> Be Se insert §29a as *peyyāla* (refrain) before each of the next 4 sections.

<sup>332</sup> Rice as *vīhi* (Skt *vrīhi*; Tamil *arise*) (*Oryza sativa*), or broadcast rice, had its origins in India around 3000 BCE and was certainly known to later Vedic people. It was a rainy season crop ripening in autumn but whose yield was

“No, master Gotama.”

Were they entertained<sup>334</sup> by women, all dressed up and bent on serving them, by their side, such as you, along with your teacher, do now?”<sup>335</sup> [Fig 5.1]

“No, master Gotama.”

“Did they go about driving chariots, drawn by mares with plaited manes and tails, whipping them with long wands and goads, such as you, along with your teacher, do now?”<sup>336</sup> [Fig 5.2]

“No, master Gotama.”

“Did they have themselves guarded by men armed with long swords,<sup>337</sup> safe behind walled cities, with moats around them,<sup>338</sup> and with cross-bars (across their gates),<sup>339</sup> such as you, along with your teacher, do now?”<sup>340</sup>

“No, master Gotama.”

**2.10.2** “So, you, Ambaṭṭha, along with your teacher, are neither rishi, nor do you live, practising, for the sake of rishihood.

Anyway, be that as it may, Ambaṭṭha, as regards your doubt or perplexity, question me, I will clarify it with an explanation.”<sup>341</sup>

## The 2 characteristics

**2.11** Then the Blessed One left his residence [vihara], and proceeded to the terraced walkway.<sup>342</sup>

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limited. This form of rice when cooked is called *odana* (ts), ie boiled rice. The change came when the people learned and used the art of paddy transplantation or wet paddy production, which was grown as a winter crop. This better quality rice was known as “shali” (P *sāli*; Skt *śāli*) (RS Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, 1983:96, 161f). See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004 §4b.

<sup>333</sup> Be Ce Ee Se: *Evam su te sālīnam odanam suci, mamsūpasecanam* [Ee omits] *vicita, kālakaṃ aneka, sūpaṃ aneka, vyañjanam paribhuñjanti, seyyathāpi tvam etarahi saccariyako ti*. See Intro (5).

<sup>334</sup> “Were...entertained by,” *paricārenti*, which also means “were amusing himself, gratifying his senses, recreating, or enjoying pleasure” (see PED: *sv paricāreti*), ie, it has sexual connotations: cf Skt *paricārayamānam*: see Intro (5).

<sup>335</sup> “By women...by their side,” *veṭhaka, nata, passāhi* [Ce *veṭhanaka, passāhi*] *nārīhi*, lit “(attended by) women by their side, wrapped up (in fine dresses) and bent (to serve).” Comy glosses as *dussa.patta, dussa, veni ādīhi veṭhakehi namita, phāsukāhi*, “garbed [wrapped] in fine woven cloth [turban cloth], plaited cotton cloth, etc, bent on comforting.” (DA 1:274). See D:RD 1:130 n1. Both Comy & Rhys Davids give interesting and relevant details, but the context is quite simple as it is, without reading too much into it. See Intro (5) above.

<sup>336</sup> *Evam su te kutta, vālehi vaḷavā, rathehi dīghāhi patoda, laṭṭhīhi vāhane vitudentā vipariyāyanti*. See **Takka J** (J 63/1:296), **Vaṭṭaka J** (J 118/1:433), **Valāhassa J** (J 196/2:127, 128), **Culla Nārada J** (J 477/4:219); DhA 321. *Kutta* (“formed, arranged, dressed”) is pp of *kappati*, “is permitted, allowed, suitable.” Rhys Davids: “The chariot of the time, as represented on the bas reliefs, had standing room for four passengers, the steeds wore plumes on their heads, and had their manes and tails elaborately plaited. ‘Stūpa of Bharhut,’ pl XII, shows us the chariot of Pasenadi, king of Kosala (see *ibid* pp 124, 125).” (D:RD 1:130 n3). Bodewitz captures the sense in which the chariots are regarded as decadent by characterizing them as the “motor cars” of the brahminical elite (1974:90 n17), quoted by Black 2007b:18. See Intro (5).

<sup>337</sup> “Armed with long swords,” *dīghāsi, baddhehi*, only Be *dīghāsi, vudhehi*.

<sup>338</sup> Cf **Udaya J** (J 458/4:106); Miln 330.

<sup>339</sup> *Okkhitta, palighāsu*, cf M 1:139; A 3:84; Dh 398, where it is used in an ethical sense.

<sup>340</sup> *Evam su te ukkiṇṇa, parikhāsu okkhitta, palighāsu nagarūpakārikāsu dīghāsi, baddhehi purisehi rakkhāpentī, seyyathāpi tvam etarahi saccariyako ti?* Cf J 4:106; Miln 330. The phrase *okkhitta, palighāsu* is used in an ethical sense at M 1:139; A 3:84; Dh 398.

<sup>341</sup> This is Ambaṭṭha’s golden opportunity for spiritual breakthrough, but his mind is too befuddled to take up this invitation. Or, as in the case of the wanderer Nigrodha and his community in **Udumbarikā Sīha, nāda S** (D 25/3:36-57 @ SD 1.4), Māra has taken over their minds. The significant point here is that the Buddha *still* attempts to teach, or in the latter case, has taught, even when there is no immediate spiritual benefit.

<sup>342</sup> *Caṅkama* here can be either (n) “terraced walkway,” or (ger) “walking (up and down),” ie in meditation or for a mild physical exercise. It is clear here that the Buddha is obliging Ambaṭṭha so that he is able to see his great-man marks.

Then the brahmin youth, Ambaṭṭha, too, followed the Blessed One, walking behind him, and, surveying the Buddha's body, for the 32 marks of the great man.

The brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha saw most of the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One's body, [106] except for two. Regarding these two—namely, the cloth-covered sheathed member and the length of his tongue—he was in doubt and uncertain, undecided, dissatisfied.

**2.12** Then this occurred to the Blessed One:

“This brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha sees all the 32 marks of the great man, except for two. Regarding these two—namely, the cloth-covered sheathed member and the length of my tongue—he is in doubt and uncertain, undecided, dissatisfied.”

Then, the Blessed One, by way of a psychic manifestation, let the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha see his cloth-covered sheathed member.<sup>343</sup>

Then the Blessed One extended his tongue to touch and stroke both his earlobes and both his nostrils, and covered the whole area of his forehead with his tongue.<sup>344</sup>

Then this occurred to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“The Blessed One is fully endowed with the 32 marks of the great man, not otherwise!” and said this to the Blessed One:

“Well, then, master Gotama, I now depart. Many are my duties, much there is to be done.”

“Please, Ambaṭṭha, do as you deem fit here.”<sup>345</sup>

Then, the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha ascended his mare-drawn chariot and departed.

## Pokkhara,sāti

### Pokkhara,sāti reprimands Ambaṭṭha

**2.13** Now at that time, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti had left Ukkatṭhā with a great retinue of brahmins, and was seated in his own grove,<sup>346</sup> waiting for the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha.

Then the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha set forth towards the same grove.<sup>347</sup> When he has gone as far as his chariot could go, he descended from the vehicle and, proceeding on foot, to where the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti was.

Having approached the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha saluted him and sat down at one side.

While Ambaṭṭha was seated thus at one side, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti said this to him:

**2.14** “Well, dear Ambaṭṭha, have you seen the master Gotama?”

“Yes, sir, I have seen the master Gotama.”

“Well, dear Ambaṭṭha, have you found out whether the word going around about the master Gotama is true [107] or not, whether the master Gotama is such or not?”<sup>348</sup>

<sup>343</sup> Miln says that the Buddha psychically display a reflection or shadow (*chāyā*) of it (Miln 167-169) cf DA 275 f; MA 3:369; SnA 452.

<sup>344</sup> “Covered the whole circle of his forehead with his tongue,” *kevalam pi nalāṭa,maṇḍalam jivhāya chādesi*.

<sup>345</sup> *Yassa dāni tvam Ambaṭṭha kālaṃ maññasī ti*, lit “Please do what you think it is now the time to do.” This is stock: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,103/1:85 @ SD 8.10); **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.6/2:104 @ SD 13), **Sekha S** (M 53,3/1:354 @ SD 21.14), **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90,17/2:132 f @ SD 10.8); **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145,6/3:269 = S 35.88/4:62,31 @ SD 20.15), **Avassuta S** (S 35.243/4:183,15+30), **Khemā Therī S** (S 44.1/4:379,29), **Vesālī S** (S 54.9/5:321,16, 17) & **Thapatayā S** (S 55.6/5:348,27 @ SD 42.7). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993:27-43.

<sup>346</sup> “His own park,” *sake ārāme*: this must be the Subhaga Grove (*Subhaga,vana*) ((**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S**, M 99.10/2:200): See Intro (1.2). *Sake ārāme* also occurs at V 1:232; D 2:97; M 1:236. On *Subhaga,vana*, see Intro (1.2).

<sup>347</sup> *Atha kho Ambaṭṭho māṇavo yena sako ārāmo tena pāyāsī*. The phrase *sako ārāmo* is curious, since it should have read *sakam ārāman*. I am not sure if it is correct to tr *sake* (see prec para) or *sako* here as “self,” as the two sentences (one regarding Pokkhara,sāti and the other, Ambaṭṭha) would contradict one another.

<sup>348</sup> See §1.4c.

And is the master Gotama endowed with the 32 marks of the great men, and not otherwise?

And did you, dear Ambaṭṭha, have a conversation with the ascetic Gotama?”

“Yes, I had a conversation with the ascetic Gotama.”

“And, what, dear Ambaṭṭha, was that conversation that you had with the ascetic Gotama?”

Then the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha recounted to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti all that had occurred during the conversation he had had with the Blessed One.

**2.15** When this was spoken, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti said this to the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha:

“O, alas, our little scholar! O, alas, our little deeply learned one! O, alas, our little expert in the Three Vedas!<sup>349</sup> They say, sir, such a do-gooder<sup>350</sup> would, after death, when the body has broken up, re-appear in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell!

To the extent that you have spoken so very insolently to the master Gotama, to that extent, the master Gotama, too, has charged you likewise!<sup>351</sup>

O, alas, our little scholar! O, alas, our little deeply learned one! O, alas, our little expert in the Three Vedas! They say, sir, such a do-gooder would, after death, when the body has broken up, re-appear in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell!”

Angered and upset, he gave Ambaṭṭha a blow with his foot,<sup>352</sup> and there and then wished to see the Blessed One.<sup>353</sup> [108]

### Pokkhara,sāti meets the Buddha

**2.16** Then the brahmins said this to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti:

“It is too late now, sir, for visiting the ascetic Gotama. Let us, master Pokkhara,sāti, go to see the ascetic Gotama tomorrow.”

Then the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti had exquisite food, both hard and soft, prepared in his own home,<sup>354</sup> had them loaded onto wagons, and bearing torches, leave Ukkatṭhā, and approached the Ukkatṭhā jungle outside Icchā,naṅgala. When he has gone as far as his chariot could go, he descended from the vehicle and, proceeding on foot, approached the Blessed One.

Having approached the Blessed One, he exchanged friendly words and cordial greetings with the Blessed One. When the friendly greetings were concluded, he sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti said this to the Blessed One:

**2.17** “Master Gotama, has our resident student Ambaṭṭha Māṇava come here?”

“Yes, brahmin, your resident student Ambaṭṭha Māṇava come here.”

“And did you, master Gotama, have a conversation with Ambaṭṭha Māṇava?”

“Yes, I had a conversation with Ambaṭṭha Māṇava.”

<sup>349</sup> *Aho vata re amhākaṃ paṇḍitaka, aho vata re amhākaṃ bahussutaka, aho vata re amhākaṃ tevijjaka.*

<sup>350</sup> *Attha,caraka*, lit “one who conducts himself in what is beneficial,” but here an ironical remark, clearly made in despair.

<sup>351</sup> *Yad eva kho tvaṃ Ambaṭṭha taṃ bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ evaṃ āsajja āsajja avacāsi, atha kho so bhavaṃ Gotamo amhehi pi evaṃ upanīya upanīya avaca.* Rhys Davids: “What could the very points you pressed in your insolent words lead up to, if not to the very disclosures the venerable Gotama made?” (D:RD 1:133). Walshe: “You have heaped insults on the Reverend Gotama, as a result of which he has brought up more and more things against us!” (D:W 123)

<sup>352</sup> *Padasā yeva pavattesi*, which Comy explains as *pādena paharivā bhūmiyaṃ pātesi*, “strike with his foot so that he (Ambaṭṭha) fell to the ground” (DA 1:276).

<sup>353</sup> Pokkhara,sāti’s dramatic reaction to Ambaṭṭha’s insolence clearly has arisen from his understanding that the Buddha is endowed with the 32 marks of the great man, and should have been accorded due respect. In that case, he could well be experiencing samvega (see SD 9.7f), which immediately spurs him to want to meet the Buddha himself to redeem himself.

<sup>354</sup> From the context, it is clear that Pokkhara,sāti has the meal prepared that very night, and probably does not sleep throughout the night. Similarly, Anātha,piṇḍika, on his first impending meeting with the Buddha, gets up thrice in the night, thinking it is dawn (V 2:155 f). Such an excitable anticipative state could be due to a high level of joy, or more specifically, zest (*pīti*), albeit of a worldly nature: see SD 15.1(9.7).

“And what manner of conversation, master Gotama, did you have with Ambaṭṭha Māṇava?”

Then the Blessed One recounted to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti all that had occurred during the conversation he had had with the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha.

When this was spoken, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti said this to the Blessed One:

“Ambaṭṭha Māṇava, master Gotama, is a fool! May master Gotama forgive Ambaṭṭha Māṇava.”

“Brahmin, may Ambaṭṭha Māṇava be happy (*sukhi hotu!*)” [109]

**2.18** Then the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti surveyed the Buddha’s body for the 32 marks of the great man. The brahmin Pokkhara,sāti saw most of the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One’s body, except for two. Regarding these two—namely, the cloth-covered sheathed member and the length of his tongue—he was in doubt and uncertain, undecided, dissatisfied.

**2.19** Then this occurred to the Blessed One:

“This brahmin Pokkhara,sāti sees all the 32 marks of the great man, except for two. Regarding these two—namely, the cloth-covered sheathed member and the length of my tongue—he is in doubt and uncertain, undecided, dissatisfied.”

2.19.2 Then, the Blessed One, by way of a psychic manifestation, let the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti see his cloth-covered sheathed member.

Then the Blessed One extended his tongue to touch and stroke both his earlobes and both his nostrils, and covered the whole area of his forehead with his tongue.

2.19.3 Then this occurred to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti:

“The Blessed One is fully endowed with the 32 marks of the great man, not otherwise!” and said this to the Blessed One:

2.19.3 “Might the master Gotama together with the community of monks accept a meal for today.”

The Blessed One accepted by being silent.<sup>355</sup>

**2.20** Then the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, having known the Blessed One’s consent, announced the time to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, it is time for the meal.”

Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, went, along with the order of monks, to the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti’s house.<sup>356</sup> Having arrived there, he sat down on the prepared seat.

Then the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, with his own hands, served the order of monks headed by the Buddha, exquisite food, hard and soft, and satisfied them. When the Blessed One had finished his meal and taken his hand out of his bowl, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti sat on a low seat at one side.

### Pokkhara,sāti attains streamwinning

**2.21** While the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti [110] was seated at one side, the Blessed One gave him a **progressive talk**—that is to say, he spoke on giving (*dāna*), on moral virtue (*sīla*) and on the heavens (*sagga*).

He explained the danger, the vanity and the disadvantages of sensual pleasures (*kām’ādīnava*), and the advantages of renunciation (*nekkhamm’ānisaṃsa*).<sup>357</sup>

When the Blessed One perceived that the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti’s mind was prepared, pliant, free from hindrances, elevated and lucid, then he explained to him the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,<sup>358</sup> that is to say, **suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path.**

<sup>355</sup> On this silence of acceptance, see **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 44.1 (2.4).

<sup>356</sup> *Be nivesanaṃ*; *Ce Ee parivesanā*, “food distribution” (prob wr).

<sup>357</sup> This passage is stock: V 1:15; D 1:148; A 3:184 etc.

<sup>358</sup> *Buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsika dhamma,desanā*. This is an occasion when the Buddha teaches the 4 noble truths directly to the laity; for stock passage, see V 1:16 (the youth Yasa), 16 (Yasa’s father, the seth householder), 18 (to Yasa’s mother and former wife), 19 (Yasa’s five friends), 20 (Yasa’s fifty friends), 23 (to the group of 30 lucky youths, *bhadda,vagga*), 37 (to 12 “myriad” (*nahuta*) of brahmins and householders of Magadha, headed by Bimbisāra), 181 (Bimbisāra’s 80,000 village headmen), 226 (Belatṭha Kaccāna, between Rajagaha and Andhaka,vinda); **D**



And just as a clean cloth, with all its stains removed, would take dye, even so did the brahmin Pokkhara, sāti, even while seated there, there arose the dust-free stainless Dharma-eye [vision of truth],<sup>359</sup> thus:

“**All that is of the nature of arising is of the nature of ending.**”

(*Yaṃ kiñci samudaya, dhammaṃ sabbantaṃ nirodha, dhamman ti*)

**2.22** Then the brahmin Pokkhara, sāti,

having seen the Dharma [the truth],<sup>360</sup>

having mastered the Dharma,

having known the Dharma,

having immersed himself in the Dharma,

having crossed over doubt,

having cleared away uncertainty,

having won full confidence, independent of others, in the Teacher’s Teaching,<sup>361</sup>

said this to the Blessed One:

**2.23** “Excellent, bhante! Excellent, bhante! Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned, or were to reveal what was hidden, or were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way the Blessed One has, in numerous ways, made the Dharma clear.

**2.24** I, master Gotama, along with my children, my wife, my retinue, and my household,<sup>362</sup> go to the Blessed One for refuge, and to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember us as lay followers who have gone to him for refuge from this day forth for life.

**2.25** And just as the master Gotama approaches other families of lay followers at Ukkaṭṭhā, even so let the master Gotama approach the family of Pokkhara, sāti. Those brahmin youths and brahmin maidens who will pay homage to the master Gotama, or will present him with a seat or with water, or will look at him with bright faith, it will be thereby for their benefit and happiness for a long time!”

**2.26** “You speak kindly, brahmin!”<sup>363</sup>

— evaṃ —

3.2.21/1:110 (to Pokkhara, sāti), 5.29/1:148 (to Kūṭa, danta), 14.3.11/2:41 (to prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa the chaplain’s son), 14.3.15/2:43 (a crowd of 84,000), 14.3.19/2:44 (another similar crowd); **M** 56.18/1:379 f (to Upāli), 91.36/2:145 (to Brahmāyu); **A** 8.12.9/4:186 (to general Sīha), 8.21.5-6/4:209 (to the houselord Ugga of Vesālī), 8.22.5-6/4:213 (to the houselord of Hatthi, gāma), U 5.3/49 (to the leper Suppa, buddha).

<sup>359</sup> *Evam eva kūṭadantassa brāhmaṇassa tasmiṃ yeva āsane virajāṃ vīta, malaṃ dhamma, cakkhuṃ udapādi.*

Comy says that the “Dharma-eye” (*dhamma, cakkhu*) is the path of stream-winning: in **Brahmāyu S** (M 91.36/2:145), it refers to the 3 paths (*tiṇṇaṃ maggānaṃ*), ie culminating in non-return; in **Cūḷa Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 147.9/3:280), the destruction of influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*). The following sentence: “All that is subject to arising is subject to ending,” shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes ending (nirvana) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as being subject to arising and ending. (MA 3:92)

<sup>360</sup> “The Dharma [the truth]” (*dhamma*) here refers to the 4 noble truths. Having seen the truth for himself, he cuts off the fetter of doubt and now has “the noble and liberating view that accordingly leads the practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering” (*yā’yaṃ diṭṭhi ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti tak, karassa sammā, dukkha-k, khayāya*, **Kosambiya S**, M 48.7/1:322)

<sup>361</sup> “Having seen the Dharma... in the Teacher’s Teaching,” *diṭṭha, dhammo patta, dhammo vidita, dhammo pariyo-galha, dhammo tiṇṇa, vicikiccho vigata, katham, katha vesāraja-p, patto apara-p, paccayo satthu, sāsane*. As in the case of **Yasa’s father** (Mv 7.10c/V 1:16), SD 11.2(7).

<sup>362</sup> *Esāhaṃ kho... sa, putto sa, bhariyo sa, pariso s’āmacco*. This occasion is mentioned in **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4.6/1:116), **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5.7(25)/1:133), SD 22.8, and **Caṅkī S** (M 95.9a(19)/2:167), SD 21.15.

<sup>363</sup> *Kalyāṇaṃ vuccati brāhmaṇā ti*. This is the only instance of this sentence in the Dīgha, and spoken by the Buddha. It appears only twice elsewhere: one spoken by the monk Isidatta (S 41.3/4:288) and by the monk Mahaka (S 41.4/4:291), on both occasions to Citta the houselord. From the context of these last two suttas, we can deduce that it is a polite monastic response that is non-committal, even refusal. The usual way of consent to an invitation would be silence (see eg §2.19). See **Mahaka Pāṭihāriya S** (S 41.4.18/4:291) & SD 27.2 (2.1).

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